NO. 44

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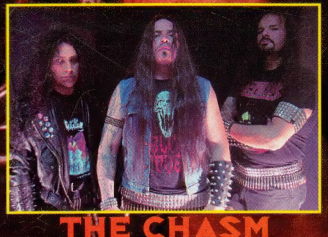

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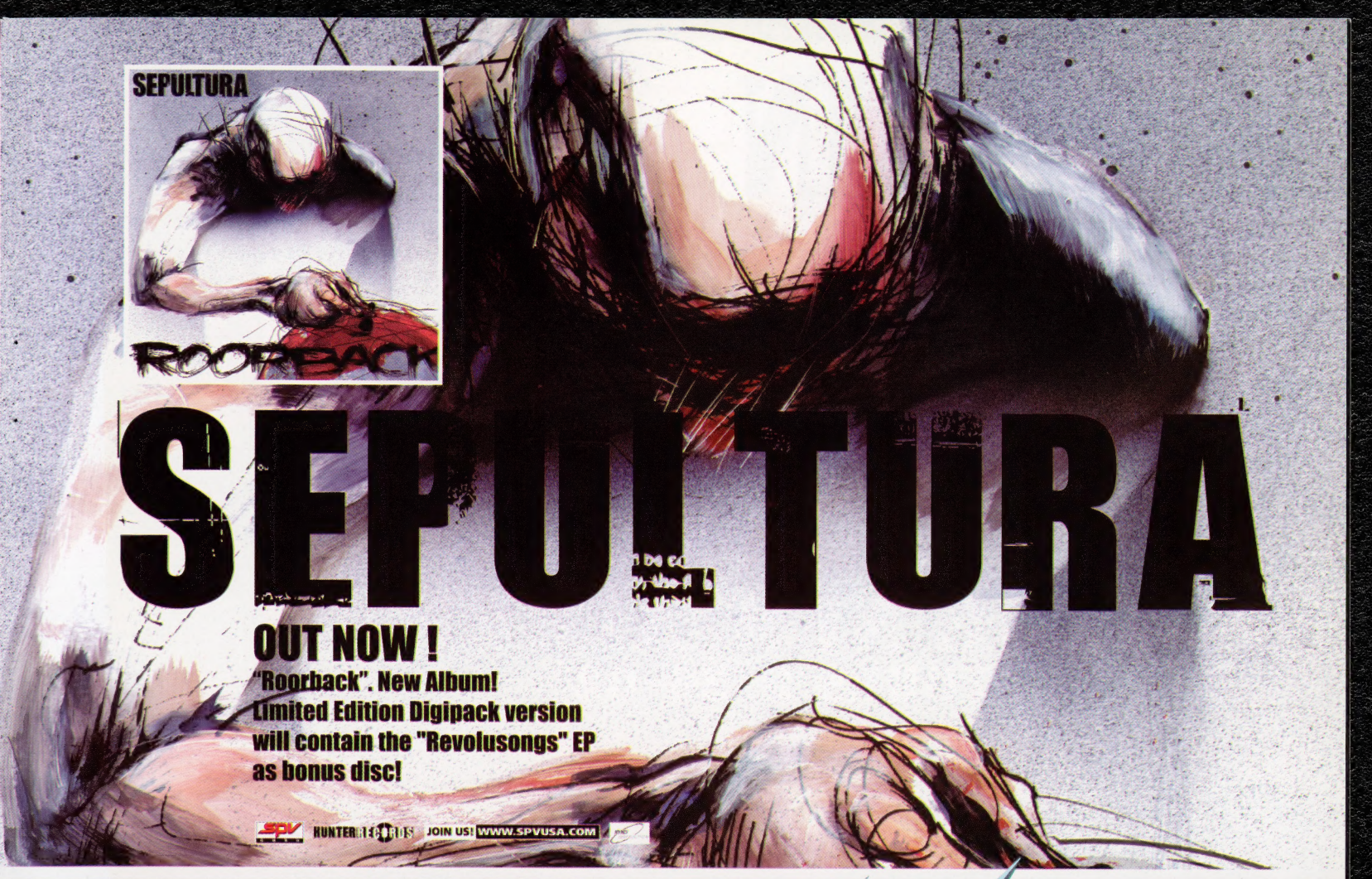

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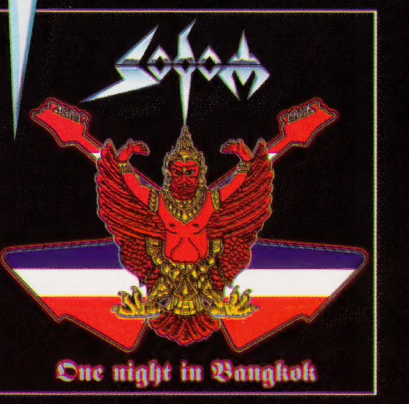

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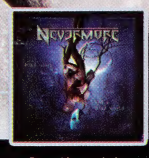

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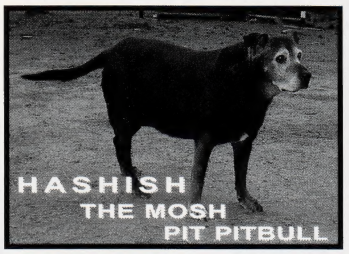

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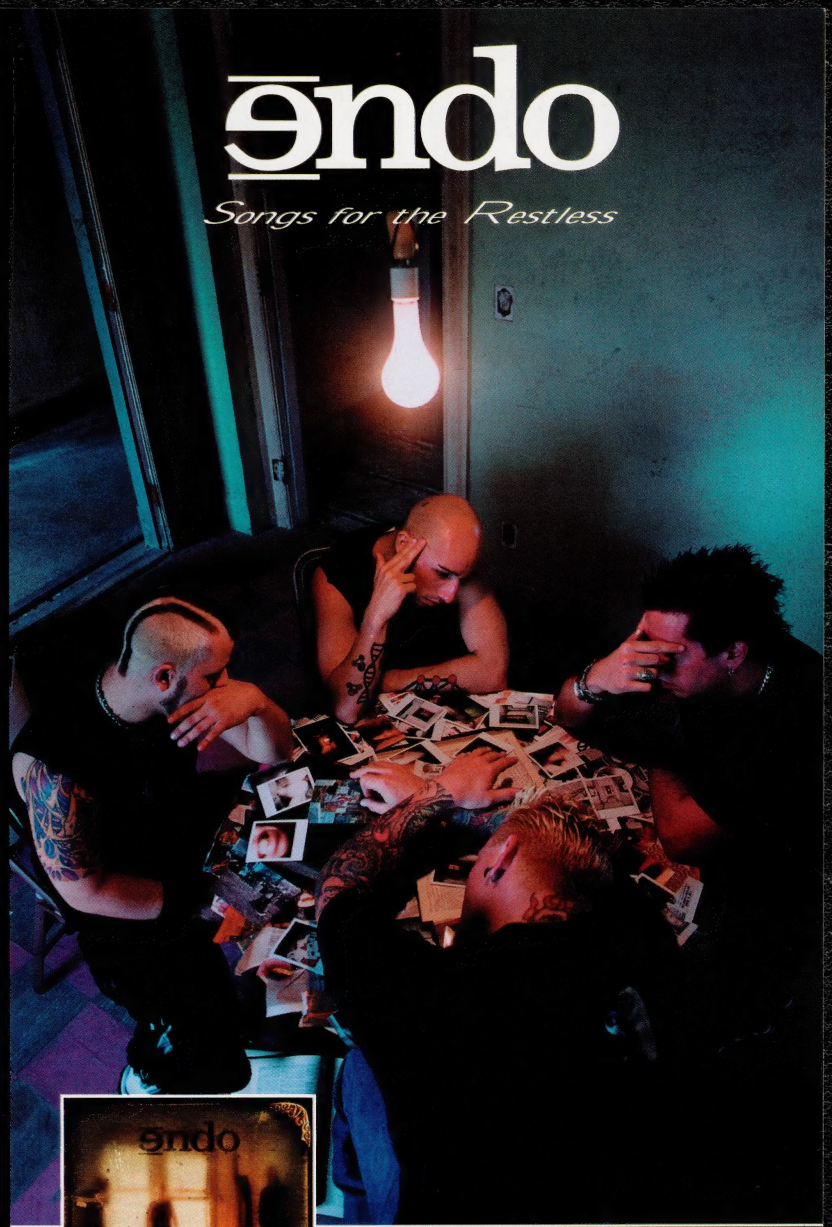

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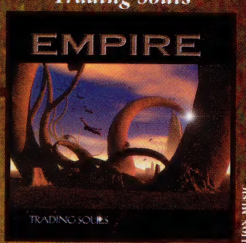

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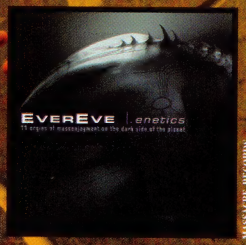

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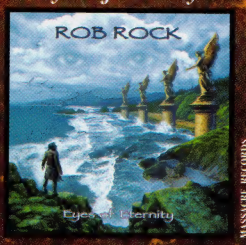

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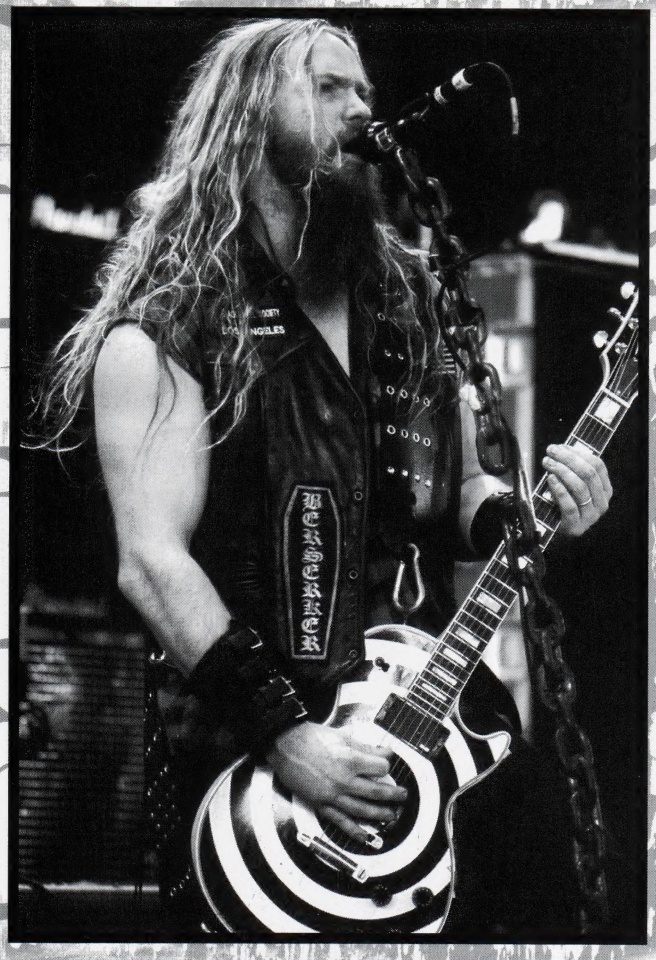
GUITAR CORNER

By Micha Kite
Photo by Frank White

Featuring Zakk Wylde (BLACK LABEL SOCIETY / OZZY OSBOURNE)



The hardest working, touring, recording and boozing guitarist on the tip of every guitarist's tongue is as synonymous with Les Paul guitars as he is with 18 packs. Whomever you talk with, be it black metal shredders to bluegrass pickers, all speak his name with reverence and after spending almost half of his life in the limelight Zakk's at the top of his proverbial game. Always a riot to interview, don't expect a normal Guitar Corner this time around. Zakk's tour manager called an hour later than expected and it seems plenty of beer had already been spilled on both ends of the line.

Pit: I think we both might have a drinking problem.

Zakk Wylde: If you pour beer on your problems it'll fix everything. You know slamming whiskey and beating peoples ass's I got no problem with that. Its like if I saw somebody punch you in the back of the head I'll kick their fucking ass, you know what I'm saying? I never start shit with anybody but if somebody comes up to me and starts some shit, then it's on. I used to play middle linebacker in football so everything is about beating ass and crushing as much shit as you can. When you're benching parcels of 376 pounds and calf raises of 1400 pounds; thank god I'm not on 'roids or I'd be a hell of a lot more pissed off (laughter).

Musically you're stompin' ass as well. I can't pick up a guitar magazine without seeing you on the cover.

ZW: I tried convincing the warden about this, ya know the wife? She isn't buying it and all my friends just go "dude, you hung around long enough that they got nothing left and you're the last one asshole". It's always a complete humbling experience cause I've been married for 18 years and we have three kids. I'll fuck my wife for about three and a half hours and then she'll go "I got to be honest with you sweetie, before we got married (ex boyfriend) had a bigger cock and used to fuck me for four and a half hours (laughter).

Hang on a second. I got my gay ass friend talking to me and he's a moron, piece of shit. Hang on I'll put you on the phone with him…

JACK: So you're writing an article on Zakk the gayest guitarist this side of the Pecos? If you don't put that in your article I'll bomb the place. Zakk's afraid you wont print it cause he says you're a pussy (Zakk's yelling in the background to do it). Here man finish the interview…

ZW: You see the comedy is endless and the best part is we're getting ready to drink more than we already have and we're standing in front of this sign that says "detour ahead" and its standing next to this piece of shit (group laughter).

Whew (deep breath)! What keeps you motivated to keep on keeping on?

ZW: I thank God everyday, and on stage I bow down on one knee and I thank god for putting Ozzy in my life and all the blessing's he has given me. Ya know my wife, my kids and when I'm playing its not me, its God playing. Sometimes I'll look at my hands and go "Thanks boss, that was cool". I don't write the songs, he does so you gotta be respectful and know where it's coming from and don't be an asshole. If God puts a ton of weight on my back the only reason he's doing so is because he thinks I can deal with it.

I've heard you do a lot of BLACK LABEL SOCIETY's stuff unplugged. Do you write a lot on acoustic?

ZW: Sometimes, it's both ways. Like with "Stillborn" I had to do an acoustic version on the radio and on the guitar all it is an A, A flat and an F sharp. In the studio we did it and it reminded me of a Zeppelin type thing and we recorded that. Then they asked if we could do some acoustic versions of other songs. The heavy stuff I usually come up with on a little practice amp, but the acoustic stuff I'll sit down in the morning with a cup of coffee and jam on a piano and usually it's the first thing you play. Its like God throws all the songs out there and if you're an antenna to pick up "Iron Man", then *you're* there to pick it up.

I'm gonna say a name and you respond. Frank Marino…

ZW: Listen to my guitar playing. I rip Frank Marino off so bad I should be arrested for how much shit I rip off from the guy. I was talking to Frank on the phone when we did the Canadian run. I'm sitting there with my Les Paul and little Marshall practice amp and I'm ripping Mahogany Rush licks from the Live album and he goes "dude you've got that shit down" and I was like "its cause I love ya bro".

I hear a lot of his phrasing in your playing and he's a guy that was definitely overlooked and should be checked out.

ZW: Its because he wasn't playing pop music ya know? Frank Marino is definitely one of the greatest guitar players that has ever lived and I don't give a shit what anybody says.

Lets run down this massive list of shit your endorse. Dude, you have your own strings for Christ's sake (laughter)?

ZW: If we're tuned down a half or whole step you have to use the thicker strings (the 70's). With OZZY all I've been using are the 60's because even though we're a whole step down we're still in standard tuning. They're 60's to 10's but I throw an 11 on there. The reason GHS put a 10 in the pack is because a lot of the kids have problems bending an 11.

Does the world need a ZAKK WYLDE Marshall?

ZW: It's a JCM 800 2203 model number from back in the day with 6550 Groove Tubes in it, but the classic Marshall tone is an EL34. We were over in Europe and a couple of my heads got smashed so when we took them in to get them fixed all the guy had was 6550's. Once he put those in the head sounded amazing, fatter sounding. It still has that classic Marshall tone but with more beef and muscle. I got to be honest with you; the whole secret is to get a good transformer in those heads. The cabs are loaded with either 100 watt or 70 watt speakers but in mine they're 200 watt EV's. The whole thing is Mesa/Boogie. They bought the copyright to those speakers and, since Marshall and Mesa are competitors, Marshall can't use those speakers but I tell kids that [it's Marshall].

You're running mainly Dunlop and Boss effects, and the key to some of your stuff seems to be the rotovibe.

ZW: You know I love Robin Trower, Hendrix and a Rotovibe is a lot different than a chorus. The original was the Univibe when Trower was using it and the Rotovibe is a simpler version of that. I love that pedal. With Jimmy Dunlop we're working on a distortion pedal right now, you've got the rotovibe… I use all of his shit. His picks…

Have they approached you about your own line of Wha pedals?

ZW: Unless we changed it cosmetically, the JIMI HENDRIX Wha to me is the perfect pedal and I wouldn't want to change anything. If they wanted to make a limited run and maybe make it chrome with a **BLACK LABEL** logo on it that would be cool, but the JIMI HENDRIX is the shit and I couldn't improve on it.

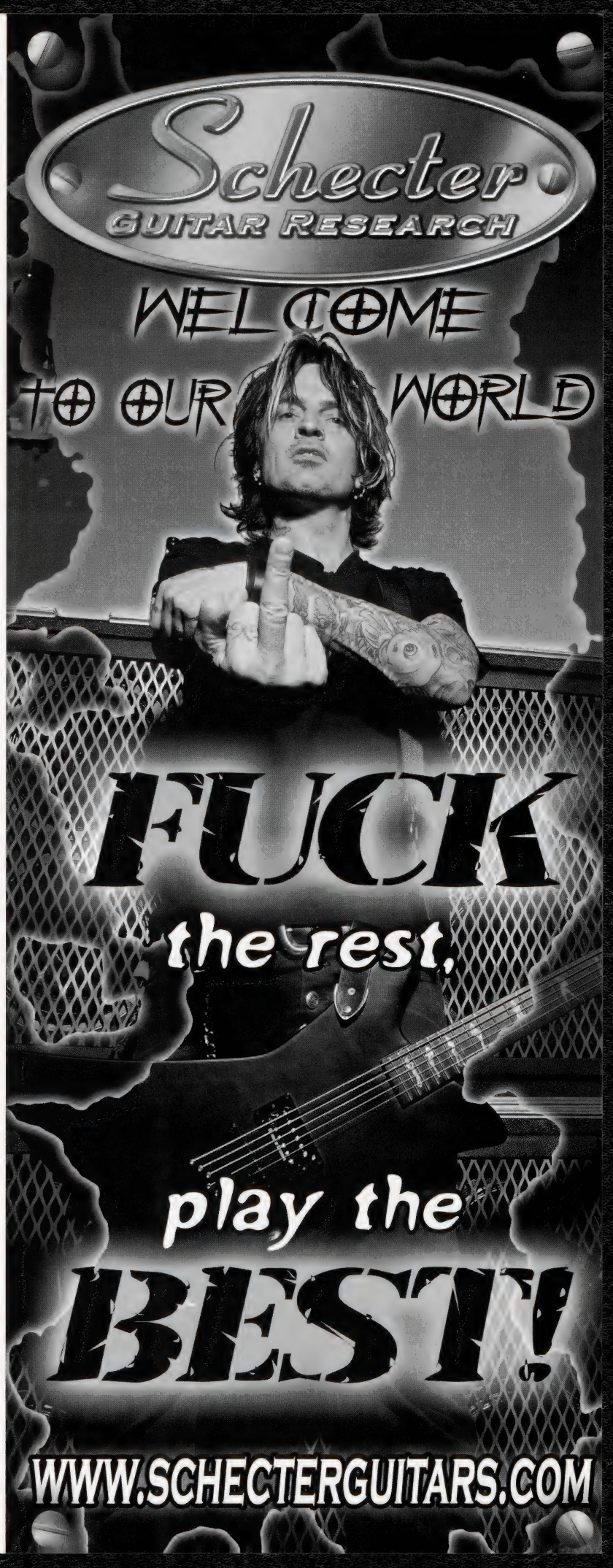
Out of all your signature guitars I never really see you play the Saw Blade.

ZW: I've been playing that on the whole OZZFEST tour, then I'll break out the camo one and after awhile they're like people, like my kids (gets interrupted again with mass camaraderie)… What are friends for. We were talking about making a version of the black and silver guitar but that's actually Mylar and its routed into the guitar. I mean you could get a silver sticker and put it on the guitar but that's actually Mylar and that's why it's cracked and shit. A buddy of mine did it in Los Angeles and that guitar sounds kick ass man… (ZAKK's road manager tells him to stay put in the bar and not roam around). So what did you think about some of the extra shit on the new DVD like the ghost of rocks past?

It got kinda slow in the middle cause somebody was a bit tanked (laughter), but when you started pitching beer bottles and road cases…that shit was rich!

ZW: The guys edited that and one night we watched it and all said that's some goofy ass shit. That's from when we recorded "The Blessed Hellride" and I think the record company spent like $8000 to come down and record the whole thing. In the end that's the professional interview that they got, just pure comedy at all times.

END



Featuring Steve Asheim of DEICIDE

If you're reading Pit Magazine, you're familiar with the band DEICIDE. They were one of the first and the best of a slew of great bands out of Florida in the early nineties. Known for their anti-Christian lyrics and over the top attitudes, DEICIDE have remained at the top of the death metal heap. Steve Asheim has been drumming for them since the beginning and was a great influence on so many of today's players. It was a pleasure for me to meet with him before a DEICIDE show in San Francisco and discuss the band and death metal drumming from his point of view.

Pit: Back in the early nineties when* DEICIDE *first got signed, there were a lot of other death metal bands from Tampa, Florida. Did you all practice in the same building? Was there the feeling of competition among all the bands?

Steve Asheim: No, actually we were in Clearwater. DEATH was in Orlando. OBITUARY was from Brandon. MORBID ANGEL was from Tampa. CANNIBAL CORPSE was in Buffalo, New York and then moved down in '92 or something. All the clubs were in Tampa and Morrisound recording was in Tampa. So it might have seemed like were all from there. Eventually there was a big rehearsal complex that a lot of the newer bands jammed at. And yeah, of course there was a feeling of competition.

When was* DEICIDE *formed?

We formed in 1987. In 1988 we were playing clubs. In '87 we had already written "Sacrificial", "Day of Darkness", "Oblivious to Evil", and "Holy Deception" I think.

You were one of the first drummers to play fast, constant double bass.

Well remember you had Dave Lombardo at the time. He was shredding it up. Gene Hoglan was out too. So there were some guys doing it.

Was your playing on the first* DEICIDE *album faster than Lombardo?

It was about the same probably. But I guess I was playing it constantly where as he was doing it in spurts. That was me just trying to keep it heavy.

And now everybody is playing really fast. You had Pete Sandoval of course, since the beginning, but now you have Derek Roddy, Tony Laureano, and all these other dudes that are pushing it to the max. I like that but I feel like when you hit those speeds the music loses the groove. The songs become riff collections.

True, true. But now for drummers it's all about the endurance, relentlessness, precision and the tightness of it all. You're right about the groove though. Erik (Hoffmann, DEICIDE guitarist) calls it robot metal. And I see where hes coming from cause its a bunch of robots out there! When you play that fast you have no time or space for groove. We try to play somewhat fast too though. We don't want to be left behind.

What do you do to practice?

Hearing all the new death metal makes me practice my speed more. But I like to do a lot of cool rolls and cymbal things in the songs so I practice those kinds of things mostly.

Don't you play Axis pedals?

Yeah I've been playing Axis for ten years. Doc Wacholz from SAVATAGE, who was working at Thoroughbred Music at the time, turned me on to them. They were just out at the time and I still have the same pair now. They're indestructible.

Do you think that those pedals make it hard to play other types of music?

I'm used to them now. But I do a lot of non double bass parts and they work for me. They are totally adjustable too so I think you can make them work for anything. I use the DW beater with those pedals with the flat side out.

Do you do any other projects on the side?

I did do a demo for a friend once but I have in the past focused on this band mainly. I didn't want too many distractions. But as I get older I think more about keeping busy. So maybe I'll try to do some other stuff in the future. We'll have to see.

What was the deal with the last* DEICIDE *album* In Torment, in Hell*?

Well it was put together really fast. Really we needed to get off of Roadrunner Records. They are not focused on death metal anymore. It's a lot of work to come up with all those riffs and songs just to have them pissed away by that label. So we were like, "Here's you're fucking album". Now looking back I wished we had put a little more time into it. We wrote that album in something like eight days. Erik wrote most of the songs for that album. He wrote one song a night. I even wrote one of the songs. Every other day we had a new song. Then when we tried to book the studio time, they were booked up and we had to wait three months to get in there. So we spent that time practicing the songs and getting them down. We did the album in four days there at Morrisound. I did all my drum tracks in about four hours.

Do you have new songs written for your next album?

Yeah we have about four done and are working on some others. The next album is going to be out on Earache Records and were having Neal Kernon produce this one. Morrisound Studios again I think too.

Earache? Same label as* MORBID ANGEL*! Wasn't there some tension between the two bands at one time?

Yeah back in the day there was some bullshit being thrown around. But that was a long time ago and that's all gone now. No problems now. We even did that one tour together. That was really great!

DEICIDE *have always been known as badasses. But you're a different personality right?*

Yeah, a little. I don't really get into too much trouble. Not everyone in the band can be a badass. Somebody's got to keep their head out of their ass!

DEICIDE *has been doing the anti-Christian thing since the beginning. I mean that's what you guys are really known for. Did that ever bother your parents?*

No not really. They were never religious and it's just that they know me. They know it's just the band, you know? My dad gets a kick out of it cause his buddies will sometimes mention that I'm a devil worshipper and he'll just say "Yeah, that's right he is" Just to get them going. But no, they know what's up so it doesn't really get to them. They were always just happy I was doing something cool. Something pro.

What equipment do you use?

Well I have the Axis pedals like we discussed. I have the Yamaha Rock Tour Customs that I have had for more than ten years. They still hold up. I have one of those Falacon rack systems; you know that levitation system? Now it's called the Gravitatior. Same guy makes them, but they are a little lighter now. I'm looking to get a deal with Premier right now, and were working on that. I got a deal with Vater for sticks. I use Paiste Cymbals also. I have a deal with them. I'm using the Dimention series. Steve Riskin from Paiste hooks me up. Really cool people. I get them at 60% under list. And if I crack them I get a replacement for free.

Amazing! What an incredible deal. How did you get that deal?

Yeah I'd like to thank those guys, Steve Riskin especially. It's really cool that they even took on a death metal drummer. I got that deal because a buddy of mine filmed a video of me jamming and we sent that tape to them. That's what got me the deal. This was back in 2000, I think.

What do you use for triggering?

I use Ddrum triggers and the Alesis D4. I have two of them actually. One for backup. And now I'm triggering the whole kit. For the outs I run kick into one channel, snare out of another, and stereo toms. Four outs total.

That's it for now Steve. Thanks so much man. I'll see you out there, have a great show!

Thanks man.

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SADOMASOCHISM

BY RYAN BARTEK

HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE YOU WERE JUST RIPPED TO SHREDS BY BLOODTHIRSTY CENOBYTES IN A MOMENT OF GORE-SOAKED CLIVE BARKER HOLOCAUST GLORY? THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT **SADOMASOCHISM**'S WORSHIP THE DARK DOES TO YOU. ONE OF THE FINEST DEATH METAL ACTS TO TEAR UP THE MIDWEST IN RECENT YEARS.

Pit: Since you're new to many of our readers, can you give me a brief history of the band?

Jason Salmer: We formed in 1999 but didn't really start to take it seriously until about the end of 2000. Our original guitar player Ed Ryan left and was replaced by Ingrid Joplin. After we worked her in good live and wrote a few new songs together we hit the studio. While we were recording we got an offer from a Grand Rapids, Michigan based label called All or Nothing Records and we went with it. Our first full-length album, *Worship The Dark*, came out in December 2002 and we have been hitting it hard ever since. A couple months back we had the opportunity to open a couple shows in Detroit and Chicago with SUPERJOINT RITUAL. That was a great experience and we got great responses in both cities.

To someone who hasn't heard your music before, how would you best describe the band's sound?

Extreme blasphemous death metal.

What inspires the music/lyrics the most?

All the lyrics are written by John [lead singer] and as he describes it, "The lyrics are almost like movies in my own head. They can mean a lot of different things to a lot of people. It's just what comes out of me." As far as the music goes we are influenced by other bands, everyday violent acts and the search for the extreme.

What are your stage shows like?

We don't really get into theatrics at all, unless it is a big hometown show. But we are definitely imposing when we hit the stage. We put out as much as we can every time and let the music and the playing speak for itself.

What are some of your favorite albums?

MORBID ANGEL - *Altars Of Madness*, SLAYER - *Reign In Blood*, ANGEL CORPSE - *The Inexorable*, MALEVOLENT CREATION - *Retribution* and DEICIDE - *Once Upon The Cross*.

How do you feel* Worship The Dark *compares to your other albums?

Well before this release we only had a shitty basement demo. As far as a comparison goes there isn't one. *Worship The Dark* from a production standpoint was better then anything we could have hoped for.

What is the Michigan scene like?

It's great in Detroit if you are playing with the right bands. THE BLACK DAHLIA MURDER is from down there and they tear it up. As far as other cities go, it is all about who you play with. There are a lot of good bands here like SUMMON, SKIN CASKET, SAPROGENIC and CHAOTIC EMBOLISM. There are more but I can't think of them right now. Flint is good times. Saginaw has been good to us a few times.

What is the best guitar solo of all time, in your opinion?

Trey Azagthoth's solos on the song "Rapture" from the album *Covenant*.

Any touring plans in the near future?

Well we are doing a few different metal fests in August and September including the Central Illinois Metal Fest on August 16th, Michigan Death Fest on August 22nd and 23rd. We play on the 22nd on that one, I think as the fourth band to the last. We are also playing the End of Days fest in Wisconsin in September. Besides that we are just doing a few local shows here and there. We are trying to stay around home and write material for another CD. We are really going to try and hit the touring thing hard this fall and winter but if something cool comes along anytime before then, we are ready to go as well.

What Equipment do you use?

B.C. Rich guitars, ESP basses, Pearl Drums, every kind of cymbal under the sun, Alises drum brain, Axis drum pedals, Boss effects pedals, monster cables and tortex sharp picks.

What are you reading right now?

American Psycho, Cabal from Clive Barker and PIT Magazine.

If you could tour with anyone who would it be and why?

DEICIDE and MORBID ANGEL on a package tour together with us and another band opening for a good six months all over America. Those are the best of the best and touring with them would fulfill dreams for some of the members of the band.

What are some of your favorite bands?

MORBID ANGEL, SLAYER, ANGEL CORPSE, SUFFOCATION. MALEVOLENT CREATION and DEICIDE.

What are you listening to right now?

As the Palace Burns by LAMB OF GOD and *Gateways of Annihilation* by MORBID ANGEL.

www.sadomusic.net

It amazes me how sometimes "the underground" eventually catches on to become so popular. When I visited the Massachusetts Metal and Hardcore Festival in 2000 and 2001, it was a moderately attended but well-organized festival. It has grown into a real force to be reckoned with, and the 2003 extravaganza was completely sold out well in advance.

The first band I caught were hometown heroes, BEYOND THE EMBRACE. Even though they are from the Cape Cod state, their sound is deeply rooted in melodic Swedish death metal, as evidenced on their Metal Blade Records release, *Against The Elements*. They feature three guitar players in their midst, but unfortunately all I can hear is drums. Sound problems plague every metal fest, and Massachusetts is no exception. The band does play to a rather sizeable audience, with quite a few patrons moshing along to "Rapture".

Chicago's NOVEMBER'S DOOM is superb in their style of doom/death metal, inspired by MY DYING BRIDE. I'm just not in the depressed state of mind that you need to fully appreciate them, but hopefully I will be next time I see them. I think.

All I can say is that I love LACUNA COIL. These Italians have been doing the goth metal, dual vocalist thing for years, while the mainstream thinks EVANESCENCE is the greatest thing since sliced bread. While EVANESCENCE is supposedly pro-Christian, the lovely Cristina Scabbia [singer for LACUNA COIL] claims not to believe in heaven, because "Heaven's A Lie." You know which band is truly metal. The band is dressed in black, flowing robes. Vocalists Cristina and Andrea Ferraro play off each other superbly, exchanging subtle looks while singing. The audience is eating it up and even responds appropriately by clapping along Euro style on "Tightrope", off their killer new album *Comа Lies*. Cristina does steal some of the limelight from her band members on "Daylight Dancer", as she plays with her hair and caresses her stomach! I love SLAYER, but I was never this entranced watching Tom Araya!

Local favorites KILLSWITCH ENGAGE are all fired up to be playing the sold out festival on their home turf. It took a while, but this Roadrunner Records band has really started to grow on me. "Life to Lifeless" sees a ton of people on stage with the band in true hardcore style. Vocalist Howard Jones looks like a smaller version of the Hulk and even does some running forward rolls on stage without missing a word. They finish with the aptly titled "My Last Serenade", and then their guitarist takes an axe and chops his guitar to bits! KILLSWITCH are certainly worthy contenders to HATEBREED's metal/core throne.

SHADOW'S FALL, another set of local boys gone national, are up next. I've probably seen them 16 times over the past four years, and the one word that comes to mind is consistent. This band always delivers a fantastic performance, but tonight they are exceptional. Maybe it's because I'm expecting to hear their entire new album, and instead they surprisingly focus on older material. "Crushing Belial" sees vocalist Brian Fair head banging "windmill" style. His dreadlocks are so long that they are scraping the ground. One of the few new songs, "Thoughts Without Words" sees Fair jump over the photographer's pit and into the audience. They are simply one of the best live bands out there. Both SHADOW'S FALL and KILLSWITCH ENGAGE will inject some much-needed metal credibility to this year's rather tame Ozzfest.

Flying in all the way from Seattle for this one-off performance is NEVERMORE. The audience is chanting their name before even coming on. They open with "Enemies of Reality", the title track of their forthcoming Century Media release. If the four new songs they play live are any indication of what the entire album will sound like, the Washington boys are about to unleash yet another monster upon the metal community. Front man Warrel Dane, with his long Satan like goatee, introduces Chris Broderick on guitar, on loan from JAG PANZER. For "Beyond Within", Dane duets with various audience members, none of which have pipes as good as the former SANCTUARY vocalist. He then takes it a step further and invites members of the audience up on stage. There are so many bodies up there for "The Sound of Silence" that I lose sight of the band members. Great set and I can't wait to hear that new album.

Closing out day one are Swedish death/prog masters, OPETH. They've grown as performers as much as this festival has. When I caught their US debut at Milwaukee Metalfest 2000, they were so shy that I was waiting for them to start hiding behind their amps. In 2003, now with many gigs now under their collective belts, they are extremely confident, and maybe even a little cocky. Vocalist/guitarist Mikael Akerfeldt now even cracks jokes while on stage.

Now if OPETH's song weren't as intricate and multi-layered layered as they are, their "epics" would seem long and boring. But of course that couldn't be farther from the truth. I'm so engrossed that the ten minute+ "Advent" just whizzes by, as does the battering ram that is "Deliverance". Akerfelt states that they won't be playing anything off their just released "mellow" album, *Damnation*, to a resound of boos. But the audience cheers when he announces that OPETH will be back to do yet another US tour later this year. Nothing from that album then, but they do close their set with "A Fair Judgment", which is mellow itself and somewhat of an odd choice. After their lone encore of "Demon of the Fall", I stumble back to my hotel room.

Day two and everyone, me included, is a little worse for wear. Hangovers don't stop the faithful, and Louisiana's GOATWHORE are serving up the only black metal on the bill. The Cajun boys "represent" in high style, complete with lots of spikes and studs. "Storm of Souls" from

their new album, *A Funeral Dirge For The Rotting Sun* has a great groove and gets lots of horns in the air.

The Gothenburg sound is pretty far reaching, and it has even been influencing the hardcore scene as of late, as evidenced by UNEARTH. Their mix of the two genres has skinheads and longhairs dancing softly cheek to cheek. Well almost. New track, "Drug Lust of the Human Condition" sounds killer.

Now the Mass Metal and Hardcore festival does have two stages, but I've only reviewed main stage acts thus far. That's because it was IMPOSSIBLE to get in or out of the small room that houses the cramped second stage. A lot of great bands played that second stage like CALIBAN, MASTODON, PIG DESTROYER, but there was no way to see them. But I'm most disappointed about missing Canadian hyperblast kings, KATAKLYSYM. I could hear the title track off their stellar new album, *Shadows And Dust*, but there was no way to view them. The festival organizers should seriously consider a larger venue as it seems they have outgrown the Palladium.

Many people consider Devin Townsend a musical genius. It must be true because they say geniuses are a little "touched", and that certainly fits the front man of STRAPPING YOUNG LAD. You know the bald/long haired Canadian is a little bit out there when he dedicates "Rape Song" to all the girls in the audience! DARK ANGEL's drum god Gene Hoglan playfully tosses and catches his sticks while jack hammering his kit. During "Detox", their keyboardist is banging his head so fast, I'm waiting for it detach from his shoulders and roll out on to the stage. Something tells me Hevy Devy would be seriously into that!

For pure blasting but technical death metal, look no further than HATE ETERNAL. Former MORBID

MASSACHUSETTS METAL AND HARDCORE FESTIVAL

WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS MAY 16TH - 17TH, 2003

By Christopher Alo

PHOTOS BY FRANK WHITE

ANGEL mainstay Erik Rutan handles vocals and guitar, and it's good to see the band back in action after their rather recent car accident. Their ultra-fast latest Earache release, *King Of All Kings*, is my personal favorite death metal album from last year. Songs like "Powers That Be" really showcase Rutan's magnificent lead work and Derek Roddy's blast beat prowess. Unfortunately bassist Jared Anderson couldn't make the trek, so HATE ETERNAL's guitar tech Randy did his best to fill the big man's shoes.

LAMB OF GOD has certainly moved up on the Metal fest circuit. But I'm a little disappointed that lead vocalist Randy Blythe is wearing a t-shirt. Because of that I can't obsessively stare at the thick patch of ingrown hair in the middle of his back. Blythe splits the floor down the middle for an old fashioned "wall of death" amongst those moshing. They play a few songs off their upcoming Prosthetic records release, *As The Palaces Burn*. New songs like "11th Hour" and "Ruin" showcase that this band has certainly no intention of commercializing their abrasive crust core sound.

After eight years, SUFFOCATION has returned, and the audience goes absolutely ballistic for their early 90's New York death metal. Funniest line of the weekend has to go to vocalist Frank Mullen. He speaks softly and introduces his young daughter to the audience, who hands out a few stickers. Mullen then gingerly taps her on the head and softly says, "OK honey, Daddy's got to get back to work now", before going guttural again on "Effigy of the Forgotten".

Violent is the word that comes to mind when thinking of CONVERGE. They play their first song in utter darkness, only illuminated by the flashes from cameras. The audience is absolutely killing each other while the noisecore band emits their waves of sonic destruction. I can't tell you how many fights break out during their set, but I can tell you I think it's the most violent pit I have ever seen.

The band I'm really dying to see again is Sweden's THE HAUNTED. They've just released their massive third album, *One Kill Wonder*, and if this doesn't prove they've truly risen from the ashes of AT THE GATES, then nothing will. The Slayer-esque instrumental "Privation" leads straight into the full-on intensity of "God Puppet". It's good to see the Bjorlers brothers both on stage together again, especially since Anders quit the band in 2001. "D.O.A." is my favorite track off their new album, and it is four minutes of pure, neck-snapping heaven. This is the single best song I've heard all weekend! Front man Marco Aro is one of the best in the business and he barks out his songs with more conviction than any of the hardcore scenesters at the event. Absolutely fantastic, THE HAUNTED are at the top of their fucking game, and my favorite band at the festival.

Yet another Swedish band in a position of power at the festival is MESHUGGAH. The band walks out on stage to a virtual wall of feedback with strobe lights flashing. When "Perpetual Black Second" starts, all hell breaks loose. The complexity of these songs is just astounding. Front man Jens Kidman is very animated and moves methodically on stage. He is almost spider-like in his delivery. They have the most elaborate lighting at the festival with bursts of light that cut through the thick dry ice. The strobe effects reinforce the pulsating rhythms of "Future Breed Machine" and then thankfully it's over. After feeling like I've been repeatedly stabbed in the chest by THE HAUNTED, MESHUGGAH leaves me with the feeling of being bludgeoned. Man, I love those Swedish bands!

The final slot or headliner of the whole shebang is SUPERJOINT RITUAL. Of course SUPERJOINT is former PANTERA vocalist Phil Anselmo fronting his BLACK FLAG meets EYEHATEGOD concoction. Most of their songs are pretty short, but they have been allotted an hour to play. That's because at a one-hour SUPERJOINT RITUAL show, you get 30 minutes of music and 30 minutes of the world according to Phil Anselmo. In between him jabbering about how good it is to have the audience so close, and how he will never sell out, they do play a few songs like "Fuck Your Enemy" and "It Takes No Guts". I actually really liked "A Heathen War" off their upcoming album. It's slower and has more of a SABBATH vibe.

Many people in the audience foolishly suspect that Phil will perform songs from his former band, but that is not the case. After letting the audience chant "PANTERA", Phil responds, "Is dead". He then goes into a tirade and rips his former band apart. "They are all about the money" and "those brothers are motherfuckin' cowards who don't give a shit about you". He then goes on to say that Dimebag and Vinnie Paul have "spit in our faces" and that he would "love to go face to face with them any day". To which he adds, "I'd roll those fat fucks". Ouch! Sounds like PANTERA fans are going to be waiting a while for that last album!

This year's Massachusetts Metal and Hardcore Festival was a resounding success. If you would have told me a few years ago that all these great bands would play on the same bill and sell out a building as big as The Palladium, I would not have believed it. But maybe I'm not the only one that needs to start thinking bigger. I think the promoters of this great festival should look to move to a bigger venue next year and really take this thing to the next level.

END

KREATOR

BY MARK KADZIELAWA

JUST RELEASED THEIR FIRST LIVE ALBUM. THE ALBUM IS, OF COURSE, TITLED LIVE KREATION, AND IT'S EVERYTHING THE BAND'S FANS WERE ASKING FOR. IT'S A GOOD SUMMATION OF **KREATOR**'S ALMOST 20-YEAR CAREER. THE BAND SOUNDS VERY VITAL AND FRESH. IN ADDITION, THERE'S A DVD THAT ACCOMPANIES THE RECORD, AND AGAIN, IT'S A MUST FOR ANY **KREATOR** FAN.

WITH ALL THESE RELEASES AND ACTIVITY ON THE LIVE FRONT, **KREATOR** IS DEFINITELY BACK IN THE HIGH LIFE. THE BAND PLANS TO PROMOTE THE LIVE ALBUM AND THE DVD BY DOING WHAT THEY DO BEST - GOING ON TOUR. **KREATOR**'S FRONTMAN, MILLE PETROZZA, TALKS ABOUT THE MAKING OF THE NEW ALBUM AND DVD.

Pit: That's the first full-length live album for you. Sounds like you're trying to sum up almost 20 years.

Mille Petrozza: Our band had been making records since 1985, and we've done a full-length live record. We've done one EP in the 80's, and that was it. We felt this was the time to do it, since our fans were always demanding a live record. Some of the older songs got a very nice treatment; they were recorded with better sound than the original versions. I think what we've done this time is we recorded a good 20 shows, and picked the best performances.

Was it difficult to assemble the final list of songs with so much to choose from, and so many fans demanding different tracks?

Not really. We sort of knew what songs had to be on the record. There are some of the older songs that had to be on it. Then there are some newer songs, and some surprise songs that nobody would've expected. I think we came up with a very good set list.

There's also a DVD that accompanies the live record.

We recorded two shows with professional crew. We mixed the shows, and came up with something in between. In many ways the DVD is a tribute to the fans, because they're the main viewers of it. Our fans are all over the place, and we filmed the fans from all places we went to. It's all very nicely mixed in. Then what we've done for people who are not familiar with our history, we put all of the old videos, interviews (on the DVD). We even included some footage from our very first TV show.

You've had some videotape releases in the past. Are those ever coming out on DVD as well?

We thought of it too, because our old record company, Noise, are planning on releasing the Berlin show on DVD. We would like to get involved and help them out on that release to make it special. I mean, the sound is what it is, but if we could find the original tapes, maybe we could do (a) few things with it. Noise did ask me to do something with it. Also they might put out the "Hallucinating Coma" video on DVD. There's definitely few things in works.

How is your relationship with Noise these days?

Things are very good now. The old management is gone, and we like the people they have working there now. They were very good about getting us involved in re-releases of our old albums. They let us be involved in the re-mastering process, and I think the albums came out sounding great. They're kind of looking out for us now, whereas in the past, they were very strict with the money. Now that Sanctuary bought them, things are very different.

How would you say* KREATOR *was changing over the years? I mean, the 80's were very straight forward, but the 90's were very experimental for you.

Yeah, 90's in a way had a very strange vibe. It seemed like the scene was dying out in a way. Nobody really knew what to do in metal. We were kind of sticking with it, but we were taking steps back and forth. We were trying to experiment with goth sounds and other things. We were trying to re-invent the band with every album that we recorded. I think that, luckily now, the metal scene is stronger than ever. Those albums we did in the 90's really helped us to focus on how we want to work from there on. It made albums like *Violent Revolution* possible.

What is something you're most proud of with* KREATOR*?

We're definitely proud of every album that we've ever done. We've made mistakes, of course we did, but I don't want to talk about the bad things. We're proud of the fact that we've overcome these mistakes. We're still around, and we're still very strong, in fact stronger than ever. We've re-discovered our strength, and that's something I'm very proud of.

When* Violent Revolution *came out, everyone was saying* KREATOR *went back to the roots, but to me, it sounded like natural evolution of your music.

Yeah, exactly. If people think that making this album is going back to the roots it's fine. But I don't think we would be able to write this album in 1988. This is a record that's more organized, and more powerful. If anything, we've re-discovered our own trademarks from the past and combined them with some modern influences. Back to the roots sounds too simple. It doesn't really do the record justice.

You've managed to get back to the U.S. touring circuit as well. How did things change?

It was amazing. I was very surprised that the metal scene in America got that strong again. We met a lot of old friends from the past, and a lot of young Kreator fans who never seen us before. That was amazing. The tour was great success, and we're coming back to do some more touring.

Would you think you'd be doing this since the* Tormentor *demo?

It's almost like an addiction. You see, it sounds cliché, but once you're metal, you can't help it. You just have to keep doing it. I got fed up with metal, then I got back to doing it. You simply can't escape it.

THE CHASM

BY MICHA KITE

FOR OVER A DECADE THE MEMBERS OF **THE CHASM** HAVE WAGED WAR ON THE POLITICAL QUAGMIRE AND SYSTEMATIC BULLSHIT THAT DICTATES THE MUSIC INDUSTRY. EVER PERSEVERING, THE BAND'S LOVE FOR METAL IS AS PURE AS THE LIFE FORCE THAT COURSES THROUGH THEIR VEINS. THEY EMBRACE WHAT MADE SPEED, THRASH, BLACK AND DEATH METAL DANGEROUS, SOMETHING FEW BANDS DO THESE DAYS. THIS IS TRUE BACK-PATCH DENIM AND LEATHER, BEER DRINKING DEATH METAL.

Always a fan of the underdog, it has become my personal quest to help THE CHASM get the recognition they deserve. In the past I have even made attempts to coerce record companies into signing the band to no avail. Are people mute? Don't they get tired of hearing the same band rehashed over and over? Cut to a few years later and THE CHASM have seduced Wicked World/Earache. "We're really excited about the new deal and right now we're focused on writing new songs. It's been a year since we recorded "Conjuration of the Spectral Empire" and the last few months we've been kind of lazy. We didn't know this deal with Earache was going to happen. We were in a really strange situation earlier this year when we released "Conjuration" because once again the future of the band was really uncertain. I was starting to get pissed off because when the album came out. We were getting positive reviews and feedback but we were having problems with Witches Brew. They didn't know what they were releasing and they only promote through their web site, so that's why we decided to re-release it here in the States ourselves. I really wasn't expecting anything positive after all the bullshit and that's when Wicked World got in touch. We've waited almost eleven years to be able to put out a decent product and now it gives me a new vision for the band."

Its common knowledge that a record company will sign a batch of unknowns, throw them up against a wall and see which bands stick. Some will argue that building a grass root following is the key to longevity. "Dan Tobin wrote us because he really liked our last two albums and I believe we got signed because of the music which is a priority for us. He understands how hard we work and that we never surrender. After we were dropped from Dwell we decided to work independently. We didn't care if we had a deal because we just wanted to keep releasing our music. I think he understands how serious we are about this."

A new album from your favorite bands is like a Catch 22. You don't want change but you don't want to buy the same record over and over either. "A lot of people have told me that this is our darkest album. We don't want to sound like a black metal band; it's just that we really went for a darker sound. After hearing a lot of newer bands and albums in the recent years I've realized that a lot of bands are missing the point. This music has to be absolutely dark. It has to be extreme but it also has to have an obscure feeling you know? When we recorded "Conjuration" we were going for something with depth. With the new songs we're going to try to do the same thing course with a different approach. Of course we will keep our style but we don't want to repeat ourselves. What's the point in making an album that sounds exactly the same? Now that we have this deal it would be a great opportunity to play whatever is trendy right now. We could play the gay melodic shit or the groovy, brutal garb and we could sell a lot of records but that's not the point of this band. For us it's about staying real to the heavy metal of death and we just have to keep pushing ourselves to the limits. We still have a lot of passion for this music and there is a lot of creativity in our veins and for the next album we will double up and take it to the next level. As I mentioned before I think a lot of bands are lacking power and the true meaning of the music. We aren't here to prove anything to anybody, but in a way we have a tradition to uphold. We want to keep that tradition of true death, thrash, and black metal and right now I think it's the right moment for us."

Promotion, publicity, distribution, ad campaigns, and tour support is the life or death of any band. Sure you have word of mouth via the underground but to deliver the message you have to bring it to the masses. "We've never done a complete US tour before because we've never had the support. When we were with Dwell they had decent distribution in the States and the promotion was decent but when it came to a tour there was nothing. After Dwell everything went back downhill. When we released the mini CD it was just like releasing a demo and I was doing everything myself. From recording, designing covers, flyers and the mail. It was rough man. But whatever happens, its just part of the path. The thing is that we believe in the metal of death and we know that there are people out there who are looking for something different and know the real meaning of this music.

END

TOMAHAWK

TOMAHAWK WAS STARTED WHEN GUITARIST AND CO-FOUNDER, DUANE DENISON, RAN INTO THE EVER-BUSY MIKE PATTON IN DUANE'S HOMETOWN OF NASHVILLE, TN. FROM THERE A SUPER-GROUP WAS BORN. NOW, WITH THE RELEASE OF MIT GAS, THE BAND'S SECOND EFFORT AND SUPERB FOLLOW-UP TO THEIR SELF-TITLED EP, **TOMAHAWK** IS PROVING THAT IT'S NOT A MERE 'SIDE PROJECT.' THE BAND IS COMPRISED OF THE VARIOUS TALENTS OF MIKE PATTON (EX-**FAITH NO MORE, MR. BUNGLE, FANTOMAS**), JOHN STANIER (**HELMET**), DUANE DENISON (**JESUS LIZARD**) AND KEVIN RUTMANIS (**MELVINS**). PIT TALKED WITH DUANE WHEN TOMAHAWK KICKED OFF THEIR TOUR IN SUPPORT OF MIT GAS, WITH **THE MELVINS**...

TOMAHAWK

BY ERRIN KLEIN **PHOTO BY DUSTIN RABIN**

Pit: Can you tell us a little history of* TOMAHAWK *- how it got started and how you got involved?

Duane Denison: This started almost four years ago. I met Patton at a show in Nashville, where I lived - a MR. BUNGLE show. He told me that he had a new label and asked me if I'd written any new stuff. I said yeah, and I asked him if he'd be interested in collaborating with me on something. And it just kind of happened. The next thing you know, we have an album out and we're touring. We ended up opening for TOOL, and now we have a new album out. We'll do about a six-week US [tour], then probably go back to Europe, and then do Australia. That pretty much takes us up to where we are now.

You have played with* HANK III, *right?

I did, but more notably, I played with the JESUS LIZARD for about 10 years. I don't really like the direction [HANK III] is going in right now.

What bands are around that excite you right now?

Lately, it's been FAUST - I've been listening to a lot of them right now; BOARDS OF CANADA; I like RADIOHEAD - a lot of people like to diss them, but I think that having experimental pop music at the top of the charts is a good thing. I like some mainstream stuff. I like some weird stuff. I keep hearing about the BLACK DICE - I need to hear them.

What else do you like? What else do you do?

When I'm home, I'm actually a pretty regular guy. I like to swim, to jog, and to read. I play with my cats. I go out. I'll sit in with local groups, play around town. When I'm not on the road, I'm at home, working on songs. I have a little studio (with) equipment and stuff. I read music pretty well. I have a degree in music, so I can go out and dig up obscure things - books, sheet music, etc., and try things out. I don't have to steal other people's records, like some guitarists do. I can go steal from other, more obscure sources that no one can call me on. [laughs]

***What draws you to these musicians in* TOMAHAWK?**

Someone like Patton can sing very melodic stuff in a very traditional manner, but he can also screech, howl, chatter, and do all the other stuff, too. So I can write pretty much anything and he can come up with the vocal part. I really like John's drumming. He's a DJ in New York, so he also has a feel for different beats that a lot of rock drummers don't have, like electronic or hip-hop based things. Kevin, on the bass, has a lot more sonic variety than a lot of bass players I know, and he's got an oddball personality.

Do you all collaborate, or is there a main writer?

I generally initiate the songs. I'll sketch a basic framework, a basic structure, like whether it's a chord progression, riffs, or beats, and then everyone kind of fills in their parts. I'm not a dictator: I can't tell people to do exactly this or that. I just come up with the outlines, and then the others color it in.

When you're playing live, what do you hope your audience takes away from the show?

I'd like to think that people, especially the younger guys, who maybe don't know, "Oh he's from the JESUS LIZARD," or whatever, that we're up here doing it. I don't think anyone else really sounds like us right now. You don't see us on MTV. We're not hyped particularly much, especially compared to what I consider to be lesser bands, who are huge; yet for some reason, we sell a good amount of records, and we draw big crowds pretty much wherever we go. If I were a younger person, I would think, "Wow, these guys seem to just be bypassing that whole thing, and yet this is very real." And to me, that's what I would hope they would get out of it.

From the live shows, do you think they sound much different from the CDs, or do you try to make it different?

No, I think that you will hear recognizable versions of those songs. We throw in extra things. Sometimes we improvise - throw in noises and stuff between songs - as much to amuse ourselves as anything else. But it's a challenge to make it sound like the record. Obviously when you record, you've got lots of overdubs. You'll see - everyone's kind of multi-tasking [when playing live]. Mike's singing and always operating other things. The guitarists - we're always moving peddles around, always tweaking things. So it's a little more involved than just getting up there and bashing it out.

What inspires you when you write?

Sometimes you just want to hear something. You'll know what you want. You may think, "I want to hear something fast and agitated," or "I want to hear something that's more smooth and linear," or "I want something that's more traditional, a more melodic-driven song," or "I want something grinding and cyclical." Sometimes it's more of a visual thing; you want something that sounds like a blur of chrome on the highway, or you want something like a truck that goes by you in your car, or you're in your bed and a train goes by your hotel room, the same time your alarm goes off. You just try to approximate those things.

Do you see* TOMAHAWK *moving forward?

Of course. I mean, we all have different projects, but when it comes time for **TOMAHAWK**, that's where the concentration is.

MIT GAS

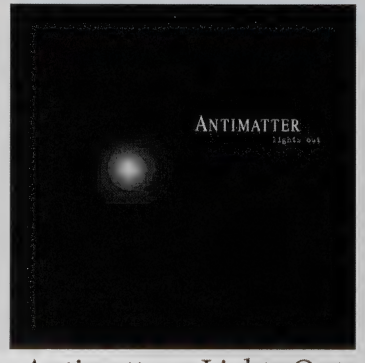
ULVER - A Quick Fix Of Melancholy EP

ULVER's *A Quick Fix of Melancholy* is a passage over passages, reintroducing vocals to the delight of the faithful. In their ten years of existence ULVER have shifted far beyond common musical ground, always and elegantly taking darker shapes. The sounds here are hard to describe; something like a hospital for the dying. Chamber music for the fucked and locked-up.
North America pressing comes in a gatefold slipcase packaging.

IN THE WOODS - Live At The Caledonien Hall

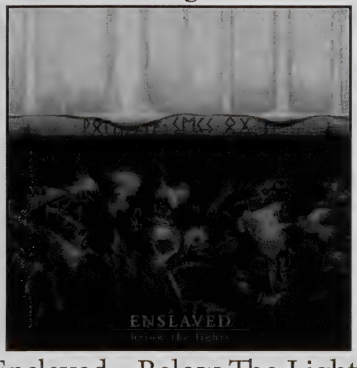
Finally, after about two years in the making, "liveatthecaledonien hall" - the epitaph of In The Woods... - is ready to be released! As the title indicates, it was recorded at Caledonien Hotel, Kristiansand, Norway, late december 2000. The album holds twenty songs from the bands career. In The Woods (feat. members of Green Carnation) made a name due to it's highly artistic psychedelic style that was compared as a heavier version of Pink Floyd!
2xCD plus includes a free sampler of upcoming Karmakosmetix releases!

Virgin Black - Elegant...and dying
neo-classical gothic metal

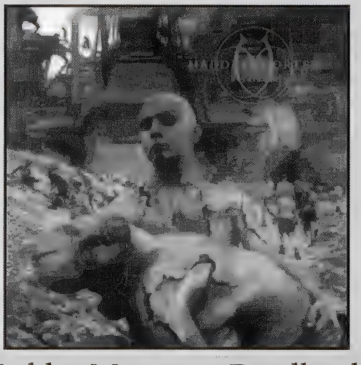


Antimatter - Lights Out
ambient darkwave

The Gathering - Souvenirs
ambient trip-rock



Enslaved - Below The Lights
progressive viking metal



Madder Mortem - Deadlands
dark gothic metal

Nightingale - Alive Again
progressive melodic metal

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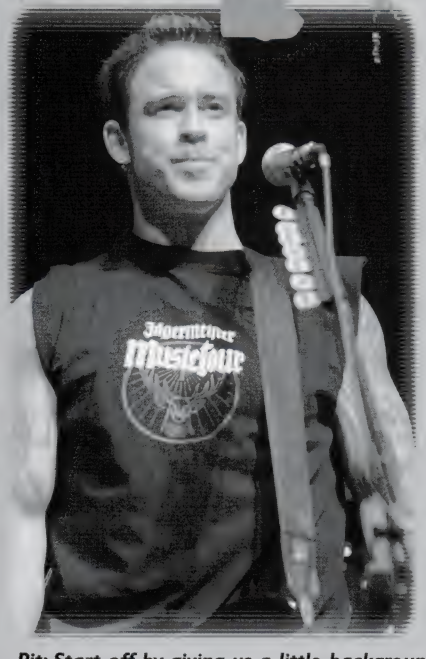
IN THE BEGINNING, THE MEMBERS OF **STEREOMUD**, ERIK ROGERS (VOCALS), COREY LOWERY (BASS), JOHN FATTORUSO (GUITAR), JOEY Z. (GUITAR), AND DAN RICHARDSON (DRUMS)- SPLIT THEIR TIME BETWEEN NEW YORK CITY AND ATLANTA. THEY SPENT NEARLY A YEAR WORKING ON MUSIC SO THAT WHEN THEY TOOK STAGE FOR THE FIRST TIME, THEY WOULD ALREADY HAVE A SOUND AND WOULD BE AS POWERFUL AS POSSIBLE. AS EXPECTED, **STEREOMUD** WAS IMMEDIATELY EMBRACED BY ROCK FANS. THE BAND HAS A LONG AND RICH MUSICAL HISTORY-SOME MEMBERS COME FROM **LIFE OF AGONY** AND **STUCK MOJO**-AND WITH THEIR LATEST ALBUM, EVERY GIVEN MOMENT, THEY CONTINUE TO IMPRESS CROWDS.

STEREOMUD

BY ERRIN KLEIN **PHOTOS BY DIRGE PHOTOGRAPHY**



Pit: Start off by giving us a little background on the band...

Erik Rogers: In March of 1999, Corey had come back from Atlanta. He had gotten together with Dan and Joey, they were in a band called LIFE OF AGONY but that band had fallen apart. Corey quit a band he was in, called STUCK MOJO, came back to Atlanta, they had some music... I got together with Corey and started writing two of the songs that actually made the first record. Corey and I moved to New York and started writing songs and looking for a second guitar player. We probably went through about 10 or 15 guys before we found John.

Corey Lowery: Yeah, I'd known Dan for about 12 years, and Joey for 5 or 6, give or take. I bumped into Dan, just out of pure coincidence. We all went out drinking and that was it. He said something like, "If you don't call me to come try out, I'll fucking kill you" or something to that effect [laughs].

ER: It just boiled down to the fact that we all got along great, as far as friends go. We all knew we were capable of "playing our part" when it came to music. It meant finding someone else with a personality that clicked; that fifth guy we could all get along with and, on top of it, bring something to the table. We had a guy, Mark, who played with us for a while, but it just didn't click.

CL: Me and Dan used to just drink beer, and Dan used to be in a band before LIFE OF AGONY called PRO-PAIN. We're both from Long Island and my old band used to open up for them all of the time and it would just turn into a drinkfest. Then it turned into not even playing together, just drinking. It [eventually] just turned into what it is now, **STEREOMUD**.

What do you think* STEREOMUD *brings musically, having such different backgrounds and locales [New York City and Atlanta]?

ER: Well I think the three of them from New York have a very strong hardcore background, with LIFE OF AGONY, PRO-PAIN, CRUMBSUCKERS... And we were more Southern Rock, based around a lot of harmony, a lot of melody. So it's a very heavy guitar-riff, bass-drum-oriented music, with very melodic vocals over the top of it. It's got a harmony with a hook in the chorus, so you can sing to it. The lyrics just make sense, and they have a lot to do with life.

How is that being received with the crowds, especially the New York scene?

ER: So far, overwhelming! In NY, we do great, and in Atlanta, it's the same thing. I think the Southern hospitality is great. Basically, we did the first record in NY, and we did the second album in Atlanta, so we split the time.

How have things progressed from the previous album to this latest one?

CL: Well, people got sober [laughs].

ER: No, for real. Me and Corey don't drink. We're celebrating over a year of sobriety.

CL: I joined and literally ten months later we were signed and off doing a record. So it was long but it was quick, in a way. We had gotten off the road in 2001 and started writing three weeks afterwards. We had been writing on the road, but after the holidays, we got back into the studio and were there 4, 5, 6 hours a day, every day. Even Easter Sunday we were there, it didn't matter.... There's not one chief and the rest Indians [when we write]-we're all chiefs....

ER: Which can make it tough some times, but it's a democracy. If four guys think something rocks and one guy doesn't, the one guy will say, "ok, well maybe I'm wrong." But sometimes, the rest of us will go, "hey, that one guy's right." We all listen to each other, as far as the song-writing process goes. How did we grow or progress on the new record? Um, it's like being in a relationship with somebody. When you're together six months, you know each other well, and when you're with someone for three years, you know each other even better. You can second-guess and know that [each other is going to dig what you've written.] You start to learn what everyone expects of one another, so that way, it's easier to get things done. And, we never really stopped writing when we finished the first record. The whole back lounge [on our bus] turns into a recording studio... The first record was a direct reflection of everything we were going through, then: struggling, being broke, writing new songs, playing showcases, traveling around the country on hardly any money. To the new record: being on tour, being able to afford some things we weren't able to afford before. There was a period, there, where we were so broke that I'd go to McDonald's and have to split my hamburger with Corey.

CL: We weren't just broke, we were poor!

Was there ever a time when you were that broke that you thought, this isn't worth it?

ER: There was never a moment. There was no way I wasn't going to do this.

THE STORM APPROACHES...

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Metal Maniacs

AETURNUS
A DARKER MONUMENT
CANUS0067CD
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MIN TID SKAL KOMME
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GRIMFIST
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CANUS0060CD
"High octane and energetic death n' roll album"
Into Obscurity

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CANUS0040CD
Featuring Frost & Ravn
"Viciously good... a jovial, time warping affair"
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VED BUENS ENDE
WRITTEN IN WATERS
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CANUS0032CD

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A HYBRID OF MELODIC SWEDISH DEATH METAL AND BRUTAL FLORIDIAN STYLE DEATH METAL, THE AMBITIOUS COLOMBIAN ACT **UNDERTHREAT** IS POISED TO TACKLE THE METAL WORLD.

UNDERTHREAT

BY JAY GORANIA

Pit: Outside of Brazil, the international metal community rarely hears about South America. Is there a significant Colombian metal scene to speak of?

Nicothreat: There's a huge metal scene in Colombia. There are a lot of really good bands. It's just that the economic situation is pretty messed up, and that's why bands can't easily tour in other parts of the world. It was hard for us and for the other Colombian bands that are playing outside of the country, like INTERNAL SUFFERING, RUIN, MISTY-FATE (and) ETHEREAL PURULENT.

I understand that the moniker* UNDERTHREAT *had replaced* SCULPTOR *to mark conceptual changes within the band.

Nicothreat: When we recorded our first album, *Hipostasis*, we decided to put it out with a new name, something more along the lines of our lyrics, music and way of thinking. And **UNDERTHREAT** is perfect, especially for the country we are from. It's a place that inspires you to write a lot of metal lyrics, because you can see a lot of humanity's problems closely.

Lyrically, the band's outlook towards humanity is obviously cynical. To reference the title track, for example: "Forgetting the basic rule of the relationship: What I mean to you is just what you need from me." Has this sentiment developed from personal experience or from viewing the world around you?

David: I understand that those lyrics may seem cynical, but they actually aren't. When I wrote them, I was trying to expose the simple but true fact that people and living things do what they do for a reason, and that reason is usually the convenient satisfaction of their own needs [like food, sex, money (or) love]. The way to do this for mankind is through others. If you think about it, even the most altruistic action is indeed a way to satisfy people's own need for recognition or self respect, and the most low of actions are most of the times intended to satisfy basic needs, such as survival or self-defense. It doesn't mean that you do what you do always expecting something in exchange, or that everybody has hidden intentions in every act. It means that you are not aware all the time of the things that control your actions or the needs you are satisfying with your behavior. You and your needs are not controlled by your reason; your reason is controlled by your needs.

How do you feel about humanity? Do you consider yourself to be misanthropic?

David: I would have to say that I'm a humanist, but not in the traditional way. Mankind is the most developed organism so far known, and the things that he is able to achieve are incalculable. But through history man has diminished himself, in part due to his pride and the lack of understanding of his own nature (due mainly to religions). Man is not a machine, and definitively not an immortal, ethereal essence trapped in a mortal body. A human, for me, is basically a thinking animal who loves, hates, kills, fucks, betrays, builds, sacrifices, destroys and takes over his own world and (that of) others. He does this according to his needs just like the rest of nature's animals. Sometimes he is brutal and barbaric; sometimes he is smart and altruistic. And there is nothing wrong or right about it. For me, accepting this fact is the key to the future survival of humanity.

VITAL REMAINS was practicing in your temporary rehearsal space prior to the Milwaukee Metalfest?

David: Yes. We met Tony Lazaro a few weeks before Metalfest. We gave him a copy of our new album. He mentioned that he was looking for a place to practice before Metalfest, so we offered him our room and it went great. They practiced, crashed at our place the whole weekend, and we got drunk a couple of times! We enjoyed listening to the songs off their new record, and I think they felt comfortable using our gear. Their drummer actually used our drum set for the fest! And I got to shoot an interview with Glen Benton for a Colombian TV metal show. We both had a good time.

***How did the Milwaukee Metalfest go for* UNDERTHREAT?**

David: This year we had a better spot. We played Friday night right before STRAPPING YOUNG LAD, and the place was just packed! It was a great show. The sound could (have been) better, but that wasn't up to us. Many people were asking about our record. Personally, I enjoyed the show of some new bands at Metalfest this year, like BARWHORE and THE RUIN. And I was glad to see NUCLEAR ASSAULT together again.

Are you planning for your next studio effort?

David: We have about six new tracks ready that we will be recording for pre-production in November. We may get in the studio again for recording a full-length album in March of 2004.

***How will it compare to* Behind Mankind's Disguise?**

David: The next one is going to be even heavier. We are exploring new sounds and new ways of composing. We have received more influence from American death metal, and that definitely will be seen in the new material. Lyrically, I think we will maintain the same line of thoughts, but we will incorporate some new elements that we have developed during our American experience the last couple of years.

After spending some time here, how would you say that the American lifestyle differs from the Colombian way of life?

David: They are two totally different cultures. Some things are better there, and some things are better here. In both cases I could say that the common factor is that neither of them knows what each (other) has, just because they don't know better and are too used to their lifestyle. They each take life for granted. People of both countries should take time to go and see the world that's outside of their (everyday) lives.

FLESHGRIND

Murder Without End

The Chicago-based Fleshgrind have returned after a three-year hiatus with their most volatile offering to date. *Murder Without End* is a savage ten-track unrelenting extreme metal assault that will mercilessly beat you to death.

ABORTED

Goremageddon - the saw and the carnage done

On *Goremageddon*, the Belgian quintet's third full-length album, the puveryors of gore cook up some of the most devastating, putrid and perverted death metal mankind can bare!

WITHERED EARTH

Of Which They Bleed

Of Which They Bleed displays punishing blast beats combined with dark and heavy guitar riffs that evolve into an atmospheric assault keeping the listener always guessing what exactly will hit them next. Take all preconceived notions regarding American death metal and throw them out the window. Artwork by Derek Hess, produced by Bill Korecky.

DIVINE EMPIRE

Nostradamus

This is the record that extreme metal fans have been waiting for since the demise of Obituary and Carcass years ago. *Nostradamus* proves DIVINE EMPIRE have returned, creating their tradmark fast, furious and extremely brutal death metal.

Vital Remains

Dechistianize

Vital Remains return to Dechistianize the weak!
Featuring Glen Benton (DEICIDE) on all lead vocals.

"Vital Remains new epic, Dechristianize, offers a very traditional metal vibe, with no shortage of brutality or satanic verses. These are the masters of the musical black arts." - PIT

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CARNAL

BY ADAM SAGAN

WITH THE MYRIAD OF SWEDISH BANDS ON THE SCENE, IT IS QUITE EASY FOR A KILLER BAND TO GET LOST IN THE HEAP, WHILE OTHER, LESS TALENTED BANDS GET ALL OF THE RECOGNITION. THIS UNFORTUNATE REALITY DOESN'T SEEM TO BOTHER THE MEMBERS OF **CARNAL FORGE.** WITH A GREAT NEW ALBUM AVAILABLE, SOME EXTREMELY HIGH-PROFILE SHOWS UNDER THEIR BELT AND MORE INCREDIBLE TOURS ON THE WAY, THESE GUYS ARE SITTING EXACTLY WHERE THEY WANT TO BE. WE DRANK SOME HEINEKEN AFTER THEIR SET IN CHICAGO, AS PART OF THE ILL-FATED METAL GODS TOUR, AND EVEN MANAGED TO CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW...

Pit: I was hoping to come out and say, "You guys killed people tonight," but I didn't get to see the show. How did it go?

Jonas Kjellgren: It was ok. It is our first big tour in the United States. It is going to be better tomorrow. It's always like that the first night.

Although* CARNAL FORGE *has been around for six years now, you guys are just beginning to get some recognition here in the United States. Why do think it has taken people here so long to catch on to what you are doing?

Maybe because we haven't done any U.S. tours. We've had some problems with the labels.

Jari Kuusito: The first album kind of disappeared. There was no promotion. The record label that **CARNAL FORGE** was on didn't care about **CARNAL FORGE** and screwed everything up. When coming on Century Media, it was like starting over from the first album.

They signed you and then they didn't give a shit?

Jonas: They didn't have any money. They are a very small label. That's what happens. They spent all our royalties on recording the first DARKANE album. They couldn't pay for our studio either.

Jari: That's why the start was kind of slow.

Jonas: Then they couldn't pay DARKANE either.

The More You Suffer is easily the best work you have done so far. How do you feel about it compared to your three previous records?

Stefan Westerberg: It's too slow. It's more dynamic. We didn't concentrate on the speed. We wanted to focus on the riffs and (making) the songs feel like different songs, not like the same one over and over again.

Jonas: When we did the first tour, we almost never rehearsed because we live in three different cities. In the first gigs we did, I couldn't tell the difference between the songs (laughs). I could sing a lyric from any song and it would fit. Lars and Stefan always know the lyrics for the songs. They'd be like, "You did the wrong lyric!"

Lars Linden: I'm the newest [member] in the band. For me it was a little bit the same, learning all the old songs. I was like, "OK, which one am I playing now?" I think the band has tried to make the whole album with more variation, make all the songs more personal. Compared to each other, they are more different. It's not focused on the speed so much as doing good songs.

It's a very violent, very aggressive, I'll-slit-your-fucking-throat type of record. Lyric-wise, are there a lot of personal stories, or is it just a style of aggression?

Jonas: I just sit down and I write the lyrics. I don't know where the inspiration comes from. I don't think much about it.

Three of you work in a mental institution. Can you talk a bit about what you see at work and how that might affect you personally or influence the music?

Lars: Like when they smash your car…

They smashed your car?

Jari: Sometimes when they have their head well, they get to go out for a couple of hours, go to town and stuff like that. We had this one patient…he went out by bus, drank booze straight up, and went back. They wouldn't let him in. His [Lars'] car was right outside, so he totally smashed it. We can't do anything, because we can't hit them or anything like that.

Do you guys see some pretty heavy stuff in there?

Stefan: Yeah, the shit, the piss…that's pretty heavy.

Jonas: But it has nothing to do with the lyrics, because I write all the lyrics.

Stefan: Maybe we should write the lyrics next time (starts singing "Painkiller")!

Jari: It's hard work, because they are schizophrenic and stuff like that, so you have to have a short while to yourself to work there, a lot of patience. I had it for like three years, and then I couldn't take it anymore. I broke down at work. I cried like a baby. The first one I called was Lars, and I was like, "you have to take care of everything with the band for the next couple of weeks." I couldn't handle it anymore.

That must be pretty therapeutic for you to have an outlet like* CARNAL FORGE, *to be able to go on stage and get all that shit out.

Jari: Yes, definitely.

Petri, you're now playing with the band your brother started. Why weren't you a member of the band from day one?

Stefan: He sucked (everyone laughs)!

Jari: He didn't play because he was really young. He's only 21 now. When we started **CARNAL FORGE**, he had just started to play guitar. He was playing bass guitar in another band when we were starting. When we asked him, he said no at first. He said, "I cannot do it because it's too difficult."

Lars: So did I (burps).

Jari: And he [Lars] told us the same thing.

Lars: When they asked me to play guitar, I said, "No, well, no, well, I have no car, well, no, I play the bass, I have no car, I play the bass." Then they asked about a year later, "Petri's going to play the guitar. Can you play bass?" "Sure." I was in a lot of thrash bands before, but they were much slower, like mid-tempo Bay Area. When I came into **CARNAL**, the tracks that I knew as our fast tracks, they were like, "Fast? This is mid-tempo." So, for me, it took a while. They had to speed me up a little bit.

Lots of people have spoken of* CARNAL FORGE *as the forerunners of this whole "New Wave of Swedish Thrash Metal." That's a very big compliment. What do you think about the idea that you're at the front, or the idea that there is a new "wave?"

Jonas: When we started, there was not one thrash band in Sweden. We started at the same time as THE HAUNTED. When I was like 12 years old, I had thrash bands, even until they asked me to join **CARNAL FORGE**. But I was a guitar player. The old guitar player asked me if I would like to join then, and I thought I was going to play guitar. I was like "Yes, Yes", because my old thrash band broke up. I was like "Finally, I get to play guitar again!" They were like, "No you're going to sing." I went, "NO!" Then I was at their rehearsal place, just to check them out. I said to my friend, "This is the best shit I've ever heard. I have to be in that band."

Jari: It's pretty strange. We released our first record at the same time as THE HAUNTED released their first one. But still, THE HAUNTED is a bigger name than we are. People say we sound like THE HAUNTED, and I don't understand it, because we released our first three records on the same day that they released their first three records. We said, "OK, we're not going to release a record at the same time as they do." So we put it off for like a half a year, and they got delayed, because they had someone drop out from the band. So they released their new record only one month before us. So the plan went pretty much wrong. But that is how it's always going to be. THE HAUNTED has a bigger name than we have, and I think it has a lot to do with AT THE GATES and *Slaughter of the Soul*. It's one of the best death metal albums ever. We don't care so much about what other people say. We sound how we want to sound.

Your musical influences, in general, have lots of melodic flavor. What types of sounds influence you as musicians?

Jonas: It's very different for all the members, because we are five people who are writing songs. All of us are songwriters and have music for the band.

Lars: It's different for everyone. Petri's 21 and I'm 33, so we have different influences.

Jari: For example, I love the Bay Area sound – TESTAMENT, SLAYER, EXHORDER, FORBIDDEN – I listened to them for the first time and loved them! For Stefan, he doesn't like FORBIDDEN as much as I do, because he has other influences. He likes JUDAS PRIEST, ROB HALFORD…

Stefan: (singing) Painkiller!

Lars: And I'm the old one who grew up with DEEP PURPLE and LED ZEPPLIN.

Jonas: When I started singing…that's why I can't sing like the DIMENSION ZERO singer or anything like that, because when I started to sing, I tried to sing like maybe Bruce Dickinson, but I couldn't manage it. My voice has always sounded like this. I started singing when I was 13 years old. Earlier we tried to be a mixture of maybe IRON MAIDEN and MEGADETH or something like that, but then it became more thrash. I tried to sing melodies. In my old band I sang melodies, but I couldn't sing so clean.

Jari: He's the singer of the band. He's self-critical. For the rest of the guys in **CARNAL FORGE**, I think that we all think that Jonas is the best thrash metal singer that we have in Sweden.

Jonas: But I cannot sing…

Jari: He cannot take that we say that, of course! We don't think so much when we do our songs. We do a riff, and it's really cool, and we build off that. I cannot say, "OK, now we are going to do a slow song or a fast song." It's impossible, because it just comes out. When you've got the first riff, you just pick up and go from there and see what happens.

What was your experience like at the March Metal Meltdown?

Jonas: Very bad organization, very cool gig (laughs)!

Stefan: It was a very cool gig. It was very violent.

Jari: People were fighting! People were doing mosh pits, and then somebody probably pushed somebody too hard, and there was fighting.

Jonas: We liked it a lot.

Did you get a good reaction from the crowd?

Stefan: Really good.

Jari: More than we expected, because we haven't played in the U.S. before, so we didn't really know what to expect. We got told a couple of days afterwards when we went home that people were talking about us the day after, saying that we were one of the best live bands on the bill. We were like, "What?" That was really cool for us. We're really satisfied with that gig.

You've resigned with Century Media for two more records, you did the Jersey fest, you're here with the Gods of Metal, and you're doing the Bonded by Metal Over Europe tour with EXODUS, the end-all-be-all Bay Area band…

Jonas: Who are going to kill us all!

…you guys must be feeling pretty good right now.

Jonas: Yes, and now we're going to retire (laughs)!

Jari: This year has been pretty amazing for us. First this, then the tour with EXODUS and NUCLEAR ASSAULT, then we did a headlining tour in Japan.

What were the Japanese fans like?

Jonas: Killer!

Jari: Totally different from the European fans. They're crazy while you're doing the song, and then when you're done, they just stand there.

THE SEVENTH GATE

BY JON "K" KONJOYAN

ONE LISTEN TO **THE SEVENTH GATE**'S EVIL SOUNDING NEW CD, CHEAP SEX AND PAINKILLERS, AND YOU'RE TREATED TO A DIVERSE MIX OF DEATH/GRIND, THRASH, AND EVEN SOME PUNK INFLUENCES.

THE BAND CALLS ITS MUSIC "SATAN ROCK" AND WHY NOT? WHAT REALLY MATTERS IS THAT THIS IMPRESSIVE, VA-BASED THREE-PIECE SUCCESSFULLY WEAVE THEIR FAVORITE STYLES INTO A COHESIVE YET UNFORGIVING AND BRUTAL VERSION OF HEAVY METAL. FROM A RECORDING STANDPOINT, CHEAP SEX IS REMARKABLY CLEAN SOUNDING AND A WORTHY FOLLOW-UP TO **THE GATE**'S SUBLIME FIRST FULL-LENGTH, **NONE SO BLOODY AS THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.** JUST BACK FROM ANOTHER TOUR, PIT CAUGHT UP WITH VOCALIST STEVE KERCHNER, OR AS HE DESCRIBES HIS ROLE IN THE BAND, "VOCAL DECIMATION AND SELF-INFLICTED TRAUMA."

Pit: What does* THE SEVENTH GATE *mean? What's up with gates one through six?

Steve Kerchner: Most people would say that the seventh gate is the final entrance to hell. For me it's more personal; grief, anger, rock bottom depression—all those things that drain you completely dry and leave you feeling like nothing. It's not the steps taking you there that kill you but it's the final breaking point....the door to psychological relapses and emotional breakdowns.

Explain the philosophy behind the band.

It's not so much about a balance between good and evil, but rather beauty and ugliness coexisting. Intense shifts between depression and comfort, so much so that it becomes a fine line between the two and you can't feel the shift.....just the weight of both bearing down simultaneously.

What are some of your influences in music and in life?

I think life gives more than enough inspiration to write music, whether or not it's heavy. If you've got something to say, you may as well say it. I listen to everything from delta blues to gore/grind, so it's a wide range. Charlie Manson—up until the freak out—his philosophy and view point, has been a big influence. His thoughts on life and self awareness have enlightened me on finding peace with a lot of inner demons.

Your new CD is diverse musically and the lyrics are clever and thought provoking. Say a few words about a track or two that you're especially proud of.

I think it's difficult for words to truly capture the raw intensity of emotions, so I'm a picky bastard when it comes to lyrics. "The Rise and Fall of Satisfaction" was right on point with the ups and downs of life. It's one of my favorite songs to play, because it's an ongoing thing. It's not about just one bad experience, but a constant struggle to find peace of mind. "Finally Freed" on the other hand is when you feel released from whatever is holding you back. When the guilt or fear is gone, you feel an air of relief, calming everything, and allowing that bit of tranquility to find its home in your head.

You've said that the underground is what keeps metal going. Recently, CRADLE OF FILTH signed to Sony Music. Do you see extreme metal now going mainstream?

I see a lot of underground bands getting more mainstream exposure and I think it's good. For a lot of younger kids, that's the only way they may be exposed to it. But no matter what, the underground will keep going. It will always be more extreme than whatever is in the media spotlight. I think it's important for bands that do receive the spotlight to support underground bands, and in time things can only get sicker and sicker. It'll be a good progression.

You've toured consistently this year. Tell us about one of the highlights.

I'm a huge fan of the New Orleans scene, so playing the Dixie Tavern was a total fucking blast. HAWG JAW and SOILENT GREEN were playing a show the same night on the other side of town, so the draw kinda sucked. We usually play house shows and bars and shit, so having everything mic'd made the sound fucking louder and more intense than usual. It was also the last show that we played with Nick (guitarist), which we didn't know at the time, so it has a little bit of sentimental value as well.

What was one of the low points?

We did a mini-tour with ANAL BLAST through Ohio and lost some equipment. The first show was in some shitty Cincinnati ghetto. When we pulled up, the owner of the place, "The Metal Blast," was fucking shitfaced and talking to me as soon as we got there. Later on during the show, someone gets stabbed, that owner gets a bottle smashed on his face. It was a mess. But I'll tell you what man; another low point was in New Orleans. One of our vehicles was stolen with several acoustic guitars, an amp, a hand drum, everyone's luggage and money. On top of that, the next morning Nick told me he wanted to leave the band. I wasn't very happy about that, to say the least.

Your CDs and merchandise have a pro look and first rate designs. Obviously, the artwork is important to you, right?

Yeah, for the most part. I'd rather have the music speak for itself, but I think that the cover art adds something to it. It appeals to a different sense.

Also worth noting is the shocking nature of a lot of the art. Do you ever think about toning down the content?

As long as the artwork fits with the mood of the album, I would never consider it to be too extreme. I think the artwork should supplement the music, not just be offensive to catch your eye.

Is the next* THE SEVENTH GATE *CD already in your head?

No, but if there are any middle school girls out there who want to get nasty with Mikey, he's ready and willing. People can always check out our site (www.satanrock.com) for info on what's coming up. I do want to thank everyone who has supported us over the past years. You will not be forgotten.

SATAN ROCK RECORDS

HED PE

BY CHRISTOPHER ALO

PHOTO BY FRANK WHITE

(HED) PLANET EARTH FIND THEMSELVES AT A CRUCIAL POINT IN THEIR CAREER. THEY'VE JUST RELEASED THEIR ALL IMPORTANT THIRD ALBUM, BLACKOUT VIA JIVE RECORDS. WHILE FORMER TOURING PARTNERS LIKE **KORN** AND **SYSTEM OF A DOWN** HAVE TRAVELED THE ROAD TO MULTI-PLATINUM SALES, SUCCESS STILL ELUDES THE CALIFORNIA BASED RAP-ROCK OUTFIT. I SPOKE TO TABLEIST DJ PRODUCT 1969 ABOUT THEIR LATEST RELEASE AND WHY THEY CHOSE TO NAME THEIR CD AFTER ONE OF MY FAVORITE **SCORPIONS** RECORDS.

Pit: I'm not really into the rap type stuff, but you have some decent songs on this album.

DJ Product 1969: Yeah, it was a little bit of a departure from the rap shit.

It seems like on your new album, you are more rock than rap this time around. Was that intentional?

Yeah it sure was. Everyone was listening to more rock this time. On the *Broke* record we were overdosing on too much hip-hop and listening to too much rap. On the new album we are really exposing our rock roots.

What led to (original guitarist) Chad Benekos leaving the band?

Creative direction. He was playing different types of music and wanted to explore different musical directions. We're still friends with him and we talk all the time. There's no bad blood at all.

So how are things working out with (former SNOT and AMEN guitarist) Sonny Mayo?

Ruling! Sonny is just killing it, he's pulling it down. Kids come out to see him and it's inspiring for me to watch him every night.

It seems like a good idea because it seems like nu-metal is dying a slow death.

I don't know what nu-metal is anyway but a lot of bands that came from 2000 were stuck with that tag.

Now your new album was originally going to be called Shadows, right?

It had more names than that.

And wasn't that supposed to drop in September of 2002?

Yeah. The album went into recall so we could formulate more songs. Jahred came in with a guitar and wrote the song "Blackout". It took a while for this record to get going. But we've been killing it live. Have you seen us lately?

Actually I haven't. I was supposed to catch you at a radio festival, but I couldn't make it. How have the shows been going?

We've been killing it man, throwing down. We're not a band that sells records. Kids probably get our record for free off the computer or whatever. Record sales do not matter to us. I'm not concerned about making money.

You've been receiving great reviews on your live shows as of late.

We try and keep it tight, but we're all sober now.

The last time I saw you was on the Tattoo the Earth tour with SLAYER and SEPULTURA.

Oh yeah, those were the drunk years. That was a hectic tour and a little crazy. We played in some dirt fields. It was sketchy at times.

I wanted to ask you about the title of the new LP. Did anybody oppose calling it* Blackout *because when I first heard the title I thought of...

(cuts in) Yeah it wasn't originally. We had about 20 names for the record. I wasn't backing that title. The label said OK so we went with it. There are a couple bands with albums called *Blackout*. I know REDMAN AND METHODMAN have one and DROPKICK MURPHY's have an album called *Blackout*...

Well for me I immediately thought of the SCORPIONS.

Yeah. Well we were going to call it *Fallen*.

But then the EVANESCENCE album came out with that title.

Yeah, it's just a name for a record. I'm not worried about it now. I'm more stoked about the cover art. It's by this guy named Axis and he's like the king of graffiti.

So what are your tour plans?

After the GODSMACK and radio shows we're going to take a few weeks off and then go to Europe and do the Leeds and Reading festivals. And then maybe the States in the fall, but it's up in the air so far.

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KATAKLYSM

BY CHRISTOPHER ALO

SOMETIMES THINGS DON'T ALWAYS WORK OUT AS PLANNED, ESPECIALLY IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY. I WAS ALL SET TO INTERVIEW ONE OF MY FAVORITE BANDS, **THE HAUNTED** ON THIS, THE LAST NIGHT OF THEIR TOUR WITH **KATAKLYSM.** WHEN I ARRIVED AT THE VENUE I TRACKED DOWN SEVERAL MEMBERS OF SWEDEN'S THRASH GODS, BUT NO ONE WAS AVAILABLE TO DO THE INTERVIEW. I WAS DISAPPOINTED, BUT SOON AFTERWARDS I FOUND MYSELF IN A CONVERSATION WITH MAURIZIO LACONO, LEAD VOCALIST FOR THE ORIGINATORS OF THE CANADIAN HYPER-BLAST, **KATAKLYSM.** AFTER TALKING AT LENGTH, THE IDEA FINALLY HIT TO DO AN IMPROMPTU INTERVIEW ON THE SPOT AND THE BIG MAN FROM CANADA WAS KIND ENOUGH TO OBLIGE.

Pit:* KATAKLYSM *has been on a roll, putting out three amazing albums in three years, with each new album surpassing the previous release. Your latest album* Shadows and Dust *is just amazing. Is it going to be difficult to top? Are you planning on banging out another album right away?

Maurizio Lacono: Well with the situation of topping albums, people said that we couldn't top *Prophecy*, and we came out with *Epic* and did that. Then people thought that was the best, but then we topped it with *Shadows and Dust*. We've always been the black goat, or underestimated. We were a struggling band for a while and we knew we had to give it all we had. We wrote *Shadows and Dust* in two months and we didn't even use all the ideas we had. Now *Shadows* is the best selling album in our catalog, but I think it is possible to get better with each album and we will top *Shadows and Dust* on our next album.

When will this new album be released?

In Europe it comes out in February and in the States it will be out in March.

Really? That was pretty fast, what will the album be called?

Serenity in Fire will be the name of the next album. It's halfway done now.

This will be your first album with your new drummer.

Yeah, Martin Moray. He's from Montreal. We had one practice with him and he was smoking. He was a fan of the band and he fits in perfectly.

KATAKLYSM ***has been on the road with THE HAUNTED, SHAI HALUD and BLEEDING THROUGH. How has the tour been?***

The tour has been great, but it has been a little weird for us. We're the most extreme act on the bill and in certain areas some of the hardcore kids have problems with us. It's been weird because half the crowd is hardcore and half is metal. It's different than we are used to. It's been successful, so we have been very happy with it.

Really? I read on the web that you stated* KATAKLYSM *would never tour as an opening act again because of the way you were shuffled around on this bill.

I'm gonna stick with that. I mean if SLAYER offers me a spot, I'm not gonna turn it down. But in a tour in our scene we are a proven band. With this new record, I don't feel that we should be an opening act anymore. And I don't feel that we should be opening up for bands that haven't proven themselves. They haven't proven that they are bigger or better than **KATAKLYSM**. If a band sells 10,000 units more than us, OK. But we've been around for 11 fucking years, and that's not right. We've got six records out and after 10 years, but I didn't want to make a big deal out of it. So I decided to let BLEEDING THROUGH have their markets. If they weren't happy with that, we would've just gone home. I'm happy it got worked out. We lost some good markets, like California, but that's where BLEEDING THROUGH comes from, so it's cool.

You were opening up for BLEEDING THROUGH?

Oh yeah. We were second on this tour, and then they wanted us to open the whole thing.

You've got to be kidding me.

No, I'm not. So it was kind of a slap in the face to us. Then it was like we wouldn't get food because we were "the opening act", we just got a case of beer and a paycheck, but at the gig, half of the crowd would be wearing **KATAKLYSYM** shirts. A lot of kids thought that we would be coming on later.

When I heard about the show, I just assumed you would come on before THE HAUNTED. I was surprised to see that you were coming on before SHAI HALUD.

We were surprised and so was NUCLEAR BLAST. Our fans weren't too happy either. The fucked up thing is we've been doing this for 11 years, and we were the first extreme band to be on the Headbangers Ball. It's also a question of respect and integrity. You don't make a lot of money doing this shit, so if you're going to lose respect over something like this, it's not worth it. We'll go home. Some people thought we might be cocky, but I don't think so. In the end it worked out, but we're never going to be open up for anybody in this scene again. Things in Europe are different.

Last year I saw you at the With Full Force festival and this year, you will be playing the Wacken Open Air.

Yeah that's one of those things that we have been waiting for so long to do. We got chosen to be on the With Full Force DVD. 20,000 people were there and now to play Wacken in front of close to 40,000 people; it's big just to be there. I don't care if we play at 10 in the morning. While we are in Europe we are going to do two weeks with MALEVOLENT CREATION. Then we wind up at the Party San Open Air with MARDUK, BEHEMOTH and VADER. We are co-headlining that show. We come back and have a few days off then do a 20-date Canadian tour. So when it's over we will have done 200+ shows in support of *Shadows and Dust*. We have other offers in the States, but it's up in the air.

Can you mention any names?

Not really, things are still being negotiated. But it would be a co-headlining tour for us. As soon as we are home we get back to work on *Serenity in Fire*, and the release date for that is February 16th. High expectations for the album. Martin coming into this band offers a lot, and it's a big step up for us. Max was a great drummer, but he was a bit limited as to what he could do.

So the parting with Max was on good terms?

Absolutely. He was a brother. He was with the band eight years and no way did we want him to leave, but his heart wasn't in it anymore. His last tour on the X-Mass Festivals with SIX FEET UNDER and MARDUK was fantastic. But Martin is just incredible, so we have an interesting year ahead of us. The next record is going to surprise a lot of people. We've got some great songs lined up. We would not release an album if we could not top *Shadows and Dust*.

Well you've set the bar pretty high.

We will go and meet the expectations. It's a challenge for us. On *Serenity in Fire* we've got an amazing album, so the one after that we might feel the pressure. For the first time a **KATAKLYSM** album has high expectations.

You've been building momentum with each of your last three albums.

Yeah and JF did a fantastic job on the production end of it. He also did the new MALEVOLENT CREATION and MISERY INDEX albums. I did some guest vocals on that album. He did a great producing job for a good price. He's getting a lot of recognition overseas too.

***Did you need special permission for the sound clip from the movie "Gladiator" that appears on* Shadows and Dust?**

No because of two reasons: One we got lucky. When an actor dies, the part is open; you can use it all the time. And if it's under a minute, its fine; at least that's what our lawyers told us. You can use anything. And in a way, it's promo for the movie too. We've got a killer one for *Serenity in Fire*.

Can you mention what?

No, I'm afraid someone might steal it! But we've used lines from "Dark City" on the *Prophecy* album and "Hellraiser" on the *Epic* album and now "Gladiator" on *Shadows and Dust*.

It's a cool way to open an album.

Yeah it's cool and it also makes you think as well. You'll see. It's a killer line. We've been underestimated in the past but the fans are behind us and the media is behind us as well.

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1993 - A Decade of the Devil's Metal - 2003

SUFFOCATION

BY JIM MILLS
PHOTOS BY FRANK WHITE

MY FRIEND STONE GIBSO AND I WENT TO SEE **SUFFOCATION** ON THE LAST TOUR THEY DID A FEW YEARS AGO. THAT NIGHT I EXPERIENCED A GREAT SHOW AND HAD A RELENTLESSLY GOOD TIME. SHORTLY THEREAFTER AT THE MILWAUKEE METALFEST, **SUFFOCATION** ANNOUNCED THEIR LAST SHOW, AND MANY DEATH METAL FANS CRIED IN FRONT OF THEIR FRIENDS FOR THE FIRST TIME. BUT 2003 IN WE SAW THE REBIRTH OF THE ORIGINAL LINE-UP OF **SUFFOCATION** (MINUS DOUG CERRITO), AND THAT'S RARE THAT A BAND REFORMS WITH THE ORIGINAL LINE-UP, NOT A BUNCH OF NEW BAND MEMBERS. SO REJOICE THAT YOU'RE READING THIS INTERVIEW!

Pit: First and foremost, how did the reformation come about?

Mike Smith: The reformation was Frank's idea. He was considering moving back to New York from Nevada, and putting the band back together just helped secure his decision to return home. We called all the original members and all were up for the job except Doug Cerrito. He had his own reasons that I'm not really sure of.

What is* SUFFOCATION *doing in regards to looking for a new record label?

Right now we are weighing our options with labels. We've been approached by a few. We are definitely interested in signing a deal, but we are not as anxious to just jump into any old deal like we did when we were kids. We intend to make a living in death metal this time, and the labels are the first step to achieving that. We'll see who's serious about the longevity of the scene by the types of offers the labels present us with. As for now, we are doing it on our own until that time comes.

It seems that a lot of the pioneering bands had signed long-term deals, and wished they had not, but rather, licensed each CD as a one-off. Is* SUFFOCATION *looking for a full-on contract, or just a label to put it on the shelves?

SUFFOCATION has told all labels interested that we are looking for a licensing deal. This time around we know that to sign a frivolous contract would ruin what we intend to do (be able to play and make a living), so for the labels that weren't scared off, we are in the process of looking over offers and thinking clearly as to the long-term effects. If it turns out to be a full-on record deal, it would have to be worked around the points we feel need negotiating.

Is there anything that* SUFFOCATION *would like to accomplish that was not accomplished previous to now?

Make a living, break into the video age, and expand the scene to world acceptance. Get along as a complete group, tour comfortably and extensively.

You said that* SUFFOCATION *was looking to earn a living off of death metal. How hard is it to make a living playing this non-commercial music?

Incredibly hard, at least the last time I had to try and make a living from it. In the past the labls didn't really make it easy. It also depends on what type of living you're accustomed too. If you just float and live with your parents and have no significant bills, you can do it, if you tour a lot. To own a house, have a wife, and real life bills, you have to really be able to cover yourself, as opposed to just enjoying the moment of traveling and partying. I fall under the second example. You have to concentrate on the business a lot more this time around.

What will the writing process be like this time around?

The writing process will still be the sick **SUFFOCATION** style, but now there will be a few extra writers. I've always written - most probably don't know I've played guitar longer than I've played drums. I play them both equally. Josh, writes and we expect Guy will rise to the occasion as well, so

SUFFOCATION IS BACK AND RINGING A BELL, AND YOUR HEADS....

there will be ideas from all sides. As for the drumming side of things, I'm into adding more flavor and tempo changes, as opposed to just a continuous blast like on *Despise the Sun*. I think it's already known we blast. We've always done it from the beginning. This time, we are all into writing better songs all around.

Extreme music fans will criticize a band if they don't change their sound (BOLT THROWER), and if a band does change their sound they will criticize them for that as well (CARCASS, CANNIBAL CORPSE). Are you guys worried about this double- edged sword?

You only need to change your style if it was wrong to begin with. The fans don't give us that impression. Change doesn't hurt, either – it's part of natural growth - but don't expect the same respect if you stray too far from the original formula. It's a fine line, but it can be done successfully. I'm pretty sure those who truly follow **SUFFOCATION** will have no trouble determining it's us.

What steps do you think need to be taken for extreme music to gain respect and boost exposure?

We need to write music that's more legible, at least for now. In order to break the scene open we have to show the masses that at least we can play our instruments, which we do better than most anyway - but they'll never know it, because they are probably too dense to take the time to decipher.

A lot of death metal is noise even to the most seasoned of fans. We all can't growl the lyrics either. I think that's the one element that may be holding the scene back up until now. Mix it up a little - let them know we actually do have legible thoughts. That's just my opinion anyway.

Would you like to see extreme music gain the amount of exposure of mainstream bands, where labels are flooding the scene with horrible bands?

Definitely. There is no reason to put this amount of time and energy into it if all we can return to at the end of the day is the garage or basement. Let the masses decide who is worth it and who isn't. The labels certainly submerge us in the loads of crap they believe we want to hear. It's funny - the only scene unheard is ours. If we are meant to be a fad and burn out like disco or something, we need our moment to shine first. Let's see if we were really ready for the big time. I suspect most won't make it, but that will set the standards for the scene. As of now there are no standards to follow. It's a free for all.

I ask a lot of bands this: What non-metal influences do you guys have? I know George Corpsegrinder Fisher is a big Enya fan for example.

Classical- Bach, Mendellson, Sebellius, Sarah Chang (classical violinist), Portishead and most anything that isn't played on the radio and video.

Okay Mike, thanks for your time. I'm looking forward to the new record and seeing you guys live!

Hey, thank you for the questions worth answering!

Six feet Under

BY CHRISTOPHER ALO

PHOTO BY FRANK WHITE

BRINGER OF BLOOD COULD VERY WELL BE THE BAND'S FINEST WORK TO DATE. I WAS SENT DOWN TO FLORIDA TO GET AN ADVANCE LISTEN TO IT, AND I WAS REALLY VERY NERVOUS. APPARENTLY, VOCALIST CHRIS BARNES WAS JUST AS NERVOUS TO HAVE IT PLAYED FOR MYSELF AND THE OTHER METAL JOURNALISTS. WITH THE TENSION OUT OF THE WAY, I GOT TO SIT DOWN WITH THE DREADLOCKED FRONT MAN AND SPEAK TO HIM ABOUT THIS NEW ALBUM, POLITICS, AND EVEN A **CANNIBAL CORPSE** REUNION!

Pit: Well the new album sounds killer, Chris. I noticed that your lyrics were very personal. It seems as though you are going in a different direction from your last album,* True Carnage. *Was that the direction you were trying to take this time?

Chris Barnes: I don't know if I wanted to do that, it just happened. I was really worried about the lyrics for this album. I was thinking about the heat that I took on *True Carnage* about it being a little one-dimensional vocally and lyrically. I was worried that I was going to fall into that pattern again. The last record was the last thing on my mind. To pick up the pen after not writing for two years, you get kind of a stage fright. But I watched a movie about writers and in the movie they said if you want to write, just write. You don't think about it, you just do it. You think about it after you've written what you have to say and that's what I did. I wrote about what I was feeling on this record and that's what came out. On the last album I was very conscious of presentation and lyrical content. I thought I had to write gore because that's what people expected

from me. That's fine, but I couldn't bring myself to do it like that. Last time I was almost forcing myself to do that. I was over-practicing my vocals, worrying about that stuff too much and rehearsing too much. I tried to make myself do the deep vocal thing just for the sake of doing it like that.

Well on the new album, your vocals are much clearer. Last time, they were much lower and I personally didn't like that as much.

You know a lot of people didn't. I was told in the studio, "Why are you doing it like that"? I just felt like I had to do it again. I felt that people were giving me a hard time on the last couple albums like, "Oh he can't sing like a death metal singer" or "he's not brutal anymore". I guess I just had to prove it to myself; yeah I am that person who I was. I can still sing like that. But it means more to me when I do what I'm feeling, and that's how I feel about this record. I never wrote a song and read it and had tears come to my eyes before, and this was the album that did that. I want to remember what I'm feeling at this point in time ten years from now.

You've written a very political song in "Amerika, The Brutal". It is bound to be very controversial. Are you worried about what people will think of that?

Well it's a take on America the beautiful, because it's not beautiful anymore, it's been fucked up. But that's just my opinion and opinions are what make this country great. But I'm like, what are we in Cuba? Are we in a dictatorship? I think this is a dictatorship. I think it's a candy-coated monarchy. You've got the son of an ex-President that's in there right now. This guy went against the world to fucking kill people for oil that his dad lost, and that's wrong. And people are still getting fucking killed over there.

In the lyrics of the song, you mentioned a cousin who was headed to Iraq?

My cousin is in the service and when I wrote the song she was on her way to Iraq. I didn't agree with what was happening and I think a lot of people didn't agree. I think the only people that really agree were the ones that see and hear and believe everything from T.V. And I'm not bullshitting you, I think the T.V. news is run by the government and it is biased reporting. They're trying to brainwash the American public and make us feel that we don't have opinions. It made me mad and I wrote that song because of that. I think it's the most patriotic song I could've written. People might think it's un-patriotic. But I've been all over this world, and I think America is the best place in the world, hands down. We went into Iraq under the guise of freedom but what we really did was murder people for oil. What happened the last time we tried to liberate people? I think that was in Vietnam. How many dead bodies did you see on T.V.? It seemed like nobody even got killed.

So you think the news coverage was sanitized?

Yeah we didn't see any dead bodies in the streets. We went over there and killed people for oil, and that's the bottom fucking line.

Your new album features a great bonus, a full length DVD for free. You're the first "extreme" metal band to do that. If it weren't for the just released new METALLICA, you would've been the first metal band ever to do so.

Yeah I didn't even know that METALLICA did that. I think Metal Blade knew about it and they caught onto that idea. When they asked me, I was like, sure. I mean when I go out and buy a CD, if there's just a two-page booklet in there it pisses me off.

Was the idea to add the DVD, as well as the packaging, to get people to actually buy the album instead of just downloading it off the Internet?

That's what the record company's whole thing was. The way I see it, if you've got 15 bucks, you've got 15 bucks. You might sway the person that has the 15 bucks, but if someone doesn't have the money, he doesn't have the money. He's not gonna be able to go out and buy it, but he still wants to hear the music. That's why the whole thing is a catch-22. I want kids to hear our music, but I don't want to get kicked off our record label if we're not selling any records.

It's a very sticky situation.

It is and it bites into your whole thought process on the music industry. Terry downloads all this great old 80's metal that you can't buy anymore and that's great. But with major artists, like METALLICA, that's just greed talking. They could lose sales of a million CD's and not miss a penny. But with the underground, if you sell 50,000 but then you lose half to the Internet, you're in trouble.

***Will the whole run of the album have the DVD? I remember the two versions of* Maximum Violence.**

Yeah that one went from the digi-pack to the live ep. Well you know record companies; they try and stretch you sometimes.

It certainly seems like you get your money's worth by actually buying the new album.

Yeah there's the DVD, the slipcase and then each page of the booklet will have its own artwork, it's a nice package. And I think the first 10,000 are going to have a sticker, too.

It seems like the timing of the album release couldn't be better. Last year saw some great American death albums, but this year, it's been kind of quiet so far.

That had a lot to do with *True Carnage* too. We released that record two weeks before 9/11. I hate to use that fucking excuse, but it really did affect the music industry. That album came out and no one was going to the malls and that bit into us. But right now does seem like prime time for a good death metal album. You've got Uranium and the Headbanger's Ball showing that there is a scene out there, and the scene is strong.

Do you feel that the scene is stronger today than it was in the late 80's and early 90's?

Before it was pure underground strength, now it's strength on a different level. It's almost like I always thought, that death metal was never going to get big on its own. It had to take people years to finally be able to take heavy shit. First METALLICA, then this band, and that band and then eventually it comes around to us. It's a good scene right now because bands like SHADOW'S FALL, HATEBREED, CHIMAIRA, are all awesome and it's great for all of us when they get publicity.

Going back to 9/11, shortly after those tragic events, you were supposed to headline one of the greatest bills that never happened. It was supposed to be SIX FEET UNDER, DIMMU BORGIR, NAPALM DEATH and WITHCERY. Will there be plans to put together a similar package tour this year?

That's what I want to do. We lost those bands, but we went and did that tour anyway and the promoters hated us for it. Even though we went on with the show, we got a lot of slack for not bringing in the numbers. But the club scene is really weird. When you do something good, they don't remember shit, when you do something bad, they'll never let you forget. This time I would like to put together a package tour. My plan right now is to put together a tour with some of the bands of the Ozzfest second stage and continue on the road with them. I'm into that and I don't care if I have to go on first, I just want to get out there and play.

I had a question about a side project I remember you talking about somewhere. It was going to be you and a few other people going on the road and doing CANNIBAL CORPSE songs. I'm not making this up, right?

Yeah that's right (laughs). Me and Phil Fasciana from MALEVOLENT CREATION / HATEPLOW and Rob Barrett, the old guitar player from CANNIBAL talked about it. Rob is always bringing it up to me. He's always like, "come on man, let's go do some CANNIBAL stuff". And I'm like "dude, whenever you're fucking ready lets get a band together and we'll go out and do a tour". We'll cover old CANNIBAL CORPSE songs with vocals like that.

Was there ever a name for the project?

No I don't think there ever was a name (laughs). But we were thinking of that as well as doing something with over the top blast beat stuff; I like changing things up and doing different vocals sometimes.

So these projects might still happen later on?

Yeah, it's a later on thing for sure. Fuck, I'm all for doing a CANNIBAL CORPSE reunion! I would like to do a tour and everything, but I don't think that will ever happen. I think they just think of me differently now. I don't think they would ever ask me to do something like that.

They never approached you?

No, they never approached me for anything like that.

But you wouldn't mind a reunion with CANNIBAL CORPSE?

Fuck yeah! I would do it in a second! I would do another album with them too. I know a lot of kids out there crave that.

But would you still keep SIX FEET UNDER? Or would it be one over the other?

No. It's not like I'm driving myself to doing a reunion with them. I just think it would be cool to sing those songs in one way or another. If I wind up in this cover band and go out and do it, or if those guys were up for me coming up on stage and doing a few songs with them, that's cool too. I love those guys, I still do. We had our time and things got over and done with and we got fed up with each other. I think it was time to leave, but there's still time you know?

Absolutely. As long as you're all still alive, there's always a chance.

Yeah, why not? I have no hard feelings towards any of those guys and I would like to sing those songs again one day.

What are your feelings then on the upcoming CANNIBAL CORPSE box set?

Yeah, that's cool. I contributed a little bit to that. I've been trying to dig up some video footage from our very first show, but I can't find the master (laughs). I think it's a good idea because they are finally releasing the *Created to Kill* demo.

So then there's no animosity in that coming out then?

No. I was fucking thanking god that they had a goddamned epiphany that made them put that out. I don't know what made them all of sudden, but I'm pretty fucking ecstatic. Especially the demo, because that was a lie, them telling me it was no good. That was good stuff.

Metal Blade or CANNIBAL said that?

No, that was CANNIBAL CORPSE. They didn't like the shit that I wrote and they didn't like the way that I was approaching it, from my point of view lyrically. It proves to me that the stuff is good and they have to admit it now and that's why they are putting it out.

DIVINE EMPIRE

BY MARK KADZIELAWA

AFTER A TWO-YEAR LONG HIATUS THE BAND IS FINALLY RE-ACQUAINTING ITSELF WITH THE FANS, AND HOPES TO GAIN NEW ONES. THIS TIME THEY HOPE TO LEAVE A LONGER AND MORE LASTING IMPRESSION ON THE SCENE. **DIVINE EMPIRE** RETURNS WITH A NEW DRUMMER, DUANE TIMLIN, AND A NEW ALBUM TITLED NOSTRADAMUS. THE BAND IS NOW PART OF THE CENTURY MEDIA ROSTER, AS THE LABEL PURCHASED OLYMPIC RECORDS.

Pit: When your second album,* Doomed To Inherit, *came out back in 2000, the band was nowhere to be found. What happened?

Jason Blachowicz: When we started doing that album we decided to bring Alex Marquez on drums. We figured he's a bit controversial person, plus he has a lot of fans from all the projects he completed. At that time Alex was partying very hard. He was constantly drinking, and doing a lot of blow. Next thing I know, the album is done, and he robbed me. I gave him a place to stay, and he takes off with my possessions. He just disappeared. We had a lot of tours offered, and we were left with no drummer. After that happened, we were on a two year hiatus because we couldn't find a drummer. We finally found a drummer from Milwaukee. He moved down here, and we were able to get going again. In addition, I ran into some personal problems with the law, and that only extended our delay.

So, what are your plans for now?

We're planning on touring as much as possible for this new record. We already have a few things lined up, and you will definitely see us around.

What kind of feedback are you getting so far?

We're getting a lot of good feedback. Everyone's saying this is our best album. We're very proud of this record. We put a lot of work into it. We have a lot of high hopes for this record.

How did your music mature since the first record?

When we did the first record we just happened to get together, and we wrote that record in almost a week. That's what was inside of us. Then we did the second album, and I already told you what happened there. With this new record we feel we're completely back in the saddle. We already have new songs ready to go. We have plenty of new ideas. What we wanna do is to take each new album to the next level. This band has a lot of potential. Unfortunately, the hiatus caused by the second album held us back for a while. Now, we have a drummer we like, and he knows how to play our songs. We never wanted to settle for a drummer that wasn't that good. We wanna do this band the way we wanna do it.

In the meantime you found yourself on the new label, as Olympic was being absorbed by Century Media.

Yeah, we recorded this album a year ago, but we were going through contract negotiations because Olympic was being sold at the time. It took a whole year process to get it worked out, but that's fine. Now I'm dealing with the staff at Century Media, and I love dealing with them. Everything is coming together. We're promoting it, and they're helping us out.

What would you say is so special playing as a three piece?

It's hard to believe that so much sound can come out of three people, but we like it that way. You have J.P. and me doing vocals, and that's pretty powerful. J.P. plays his guitar using two amps, so it sounds like two guitar players. We get a lot of complements how intense we sound with only three people in the band. We're like the RUSH of death metal (laughs). We've tried other guitar players, but they just couldn't cut it. We're destined to be a three piece, and we're very happy that way. It's easier to keep the band on the road, and more money to get around.

Financially, how does a band like* DIVINE EMPIRE *survive?

I run a kitchen here in Florida. I'm a chef. I work in this really cool bar. I love working here. It's a biker bar, and I make a lot of different specials. I have 15 years of experience when it comes to cooking and preparing foods. When I go on the road, I always bring out the grill. Other bands love me for that, and get ideas from me. I make everything.

With so much time passed, did your relationship with the guys from MALEVOLENT CREATION improve?

Absolutely. We see each other all the time. We buy each other drinks. All that bad blood is in the past now. I mean, I was technically married to that band. I spend ten years playing with Phil (Fasciana). They made me what I am today, so there's nothing to be upset about.

NUCLEAR BLAST

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Gorgoroth

twilight of the idols

Norway's black metal underground has broken open and spewed forth its most diabolical fiends. After a 3 year absence, Gorgoroth return to smash the "filthy" black metal of late. Bringing back the traditional, brutal, early '90s sound that can rightly be called *true* Norwegian black metal.

Graveworm

engraved in black

Although Norway gave birth to black metal, Italy is turning it up a notch. Graveworm's intense atmospheres combined with dark lyrics and metal creates an awesome mixture rarely seen today. *Engraved in Black* is on par with classics like Satyricon's *Nemesis Divina* and *Enthrone Darkness Triumphant* from Dimmu Borgir.

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AS EVENING MIST CREEPS OVER THE BODY OF YMIR, THE VALKYRIES WEEP. FENRIZ HAS SNAPPED THE BINDINGS OF GLEIPNIR AND CLIMBS UPON HIS MIGHTY **DARKTHRONE**. NO OTHER GRIFFIN EMBODIES DESTRUCTION (AND PERHAPS SELF-DESTRUCTION) WITHIN THE REALMS OF METAL QUITE LIKE FENRIZ WOLF. HE IS ANTEDILUVIAN. HE IS ETERNAL...AT LEAST UNTIL RAGNAROK!

DARKTHRONE

BY MICHA KITE

Pit: I've read on your web page that 2003 is the year of change in the structure of* DARKTHRONE*, how so?

Fenriz Wolf: When Nocturno writes new material he has always been like "this is gonna change **DARKTHRONE**" and "this is so different" but when we run it through the **DARKTHRONE** machine and go to the studio and record it, it sounds like any of our other albums. It's really dangerous for us to make plans. If we plan to make a cross, it turns out to be an upside down cross. I don't even have a computer so I don't know what's going on with the web site. I think I saw it once last year.

Are you turned off by the whole concept of the Internet?

I ain't got time for that, because if I bought a computer I might get hooked. People don't believe me but I'm spending a lot of time in the forest, a lot of time drinking and working full time, which I've been doing since 1988. I usually contact people from my mobile phone and I can't really walk around with a laptop in the forest. Anyway I had some information to tell you but I lost my thought in the question and I'm only on my second cider (laughter).

You prefer cider these days?

I never drank hard liquor and I drink cider now because I can't smoke. If I drink beer I have to smoke. If I drank whisky, believe me I've had money to drink everyday since '92. If I drank whisky there's no way I would be sitting here doing this interview. I may have had other diseases but the liver is still working.

Are the lyrics to "Fucked Up And Ready To Die" about alcoholism?

No, but it is part of the lifestyle of black metal. It's the backside of a metal song. Many bands show the front side of metal, songs about pride or whatever and I like to show the backside.

A darker side of life?

It's all about darkness, dude. These perspectives obsess myself, Satyr (SATYRICON) and one of the guys from TURBONEGRO and you'll find a lot of similarities between Satyr's lyrics and mine. I'm kicking in all directions man, and mostly kicking myself but it isn't going to be a pleasant read for anyone whether they're Christian or anti-Christian.

Is there disharmony between you and Nocturno when it comes to writing material?

Back in the day we had a dictatorship when we were a three piece because we all knew we were on

point when it came to making black metal. We figured out Zephyrous, Nocturno and I would all write our own songs and no one would interfere whether we liked it or not. We each trusted that everything would be bona fide and when we lost Zephyrous we kept on with that. Divided we stand to make our own shit.

With a title like* Hate Them *it brings on speculation of political and religious loathing.

Who do you hate man?

I'm not sure...

HA! Now you understand how I feel when I get that question. Ok, it's the people designing the subways in Norway, which makes people hate each other. It's the people who make their long sleeves like eight year olds. I hate the KING DIAMOND album, *Them*. Then again we all know hate is a monument of the metal scene. It's not about love you know? I spent so much time on *Plaguewielder* explaining to the Bulgarian, Danish or even Australian people what the hell I meant that this time I thought I would just go for the jugular and I wouldn't get fucking questions about the title (laughter).

Well, everyone wants to know what's going on inside of your head you know?

I was sitting down having a smoke with a friend and we started talking about this and it all boils down to when I sit down and read a paper and the next guy sits down and reads the paper what happens in our heads? There's this huge difference from person to person. There's a Norwegian saying "we think *our* thoughts". It's a silent democracy and we are modern people, you have been warned.

But in the past you've been accused of voicing your opinion too strongly.

We've been known for not thinking before we speak when it comes to interviews but many young bands do that. I'm becoming an old fart when it comes to these situations and I watch what I say. The thing is that it's all in my lyrics but I'm not talking about my lyrics so its very frustrating for people. We were never trying to please anyone with **DARKTHRONE** and we weren't trying to preach either and that's one of the reasons I don't like to play live. The Norwegian black metal bands are quick to be bothered by how Christianity is preached here in Norway, so why would I do the same thing and preach different views. I just want the album to be available and I don't want to push these things. I'm really bad about selling my own shit you know? I don't sell **DARKTHRONE** well.

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STEEL PROPHET

BY MARK KADZIELAWA

AFTER RELEASING THEIR LATEST ALBUM, UNSEEN, THE BAND SPLIT UP. THE NUCLEAR BLAST RECORDS CONTRACT SIMPLY EXPIRED, YET THE ALBUM RECEIVED VERY LITTLE PROMOTION AND WAS BASICALLY LOST IN THE SHUFFLE OF RELEASES. THAT WAS NOT THE END OF THE CHANGES IN **STEEL PROPHET**. LONGTIME VOCALIST RICK MYTHIASIN WAS LET GO AND SO WAS GUITARIST JIM WILLIAMS. **STEEL PROPHET** QUICKLY ACQUIRED SERVICES OF NADIR D'PRIEST, A VETERAN VOCALIST OF THE HARD ROCK SCENE. WE'VE YET TO HEAR THIS LINE UP PERFORM, BUT IT SURE LOOKS PROMISING. GUITARIST, STEVE KACHINSKY, PROVIDES THE LATEST DETAILS, AND ASSURES THE CHANGES WILL ONLY HELP TO ADVANCE THE BAND.

Pit: It seems like* STEEL PROPHET *is at a career crossroads. Did you see that coming?

Steve Kachinsky: The writing was on the wall for a couple years. There was bad blood between Rick and some of the other members for a while and since there was also some tension with Jim, it was decided to part with both guys rather than just one at a time.

Can you explain why your singer left the band?

It had been a tough couple of years and everyone really needed a change, so he did what had to be done! It had just come to the point of mutual loathing, if you know what I mean.

***Nadir D'Priest is no stranger to the music scene, but how will he fit* STEEL PROPHET?**

He fits really well with the guys in the group. He's a seasoned pro and knows how to go about things in a professional way. He is different sounding than Rick. His voice is great and his melodies are very inventive. I used to write melodies for Rick most of the time, but I never came up with melodies as strong as what Nadir is writing. His voice is more masculine sounding than Rick's I think, but in the end the fans will cast the deciding vote on the Nadir vs. Rick debate, if there is one. I think it's going to sound like a whole new band in many ways.

It seems there was nothing really done for the last album. Are you doing anything yourself to promote it?

We did about two hundred interviews for the record in Europe and the US, and there were plenty of reviews, but Nuclear Blast didn't promote it much with ads because they knew it was our last record for them. Most labels don't promote an artist who isn't going to be with them for the next record, because there isn't going to be a significant return on that investment. It's like doing our next label a favor, if they make us bigger! Now, you would think they would promote it anyway so they make some money on THIS record, but that's a record company mentality for you.

Why did you split from Nuclear Blast? Is there a new deal in works?

The terms of the contract were fulfilled and it was time to move on and hopefully secure a deal where it's more favorable to us now, as opposed to a great moneymaker for a record company. We have a lot of interested labels asking about our new line up and new songs. We'll be doing a demo recording soon, so everyone knows what our new line up sounds like. We already had a couple offers before we found our new members so I think we're in good shape.

How will the new face of* STEEL PROPHET *look and sound? Do you expect to change your sound with the addition of the new frontman?

Well, Nadir is rougher and deeper than Rick. He's also a more melodic singer. We still sound like **STEEL PROPHET** but it does sound like a brand new band too. I think some people that didn't care for our vocals before have a second chance to discover the band now. Of course we won't please everybody, but we are metal fans too and we're pleasing ourselves so that's a major consideration.

Once you split with Nuclear Blast, do you regain any right to your back catalogue?

Not for seven years, I believe…

Did the new line up have a chance to write any new songs or play live? What are the initial feelings?

We have nine new songs at the moment, and we think they're coming out pretty good. We're looking forward to playing them live so we can see what the fans think. So far it's my favorite material since *Dark Hallucinations*.

NUCLEAR BLAST

SUMMER DYING

BY RYAN BARTEK

ONE OF THE MOST INTENSE YOUNG OUTFITS GAINING MOMENTUM IN THE METAL UNDERWORLD THESE DAYS IS A GROUP BY THE NAME OF **SUMMER DYING.** PROCREATED JUST NORTH OF DETROIT, THIS LANSING-BASED MELODIC THRASH MACHINE HAS STEADILY GROWN A DIE-HARD FAN BASE AND IS POISED TO WREAK SERIOUS HAVOC ACROSS THE U.S. IN THE COMING YEAR. 2003 MARKS THE RELEASE OF THEIR SOPHOMORE EFFORT ONE LAST TASTE OF TEMPTATION; AN ALBUM THAT HAS RECEIVED FRENZIED PRAISE THROUGHOUT THE PRESS AND HIS IMPRESSED COUNTLESS SCORES OF OTHERS. **SUMMER DYING** COMBINES THE RAW ENERGY OF MID-90'S SWEDISH DEATH METAL WITH THE MELODIC QUALITIES OF **IRON MAIDEN** AND **IN FLAMES**, ALL THE WHILE BLASTING FORTH A MASSIVE ASSAULT ON THE SENSES IN THE VEIN OF **SLAYER**, **AT THE GATES** AND OLD-SCHOOL **PANTERA.** HUGE RIFFS, GIANT GROOVES, POWERFUL VOCALS, TIGHT BLASTBEATS, AND PUMMELING BASS LINES - THIS BAND SHREDS WITH THE BEST OF THEM. PIT RECENTLY SPOKE TO FRONTMAN KERRY CRIPE ON THE FUTURE OF THIS RISING FORCE.

Pit: Since you're new to many of our readers, can you give me a brief history of the band?

Kerry Cripe: **SUMMER DYING** formed in mid-2001 as a joining of two departing melodic metal bands: the vocalist of SOMBER and the remaining members of MIND POLLUTION, Both Lansing, Michigan-based bands.

To someone who hasn't heard your music before, how would you best describe the band's sound?

We are a melodic death metal band with some hardcore tendencies. Bands we sound like would be AT THE GATES, SOILWORK, KILLSWITCH ENGAGE, OPETH and THE HAUNTED.

What inspires the music and lyrics the most?

We are very inspired by the Swedish sound. We all listen to other types of music so we draw from many different spectrums. I love bands like COLDPLAY, AVENGED SEVENFOLD and RADIOHEAD. The other guys are into different stuff, too. Briant's really into 80's metal. Ben is into the whole OPETH, ANATHEMA and KATATONIA sound. We just love music and have no boundaries to what we are influenced by. My lyrics are all personal and real. Bob used to write some of the lyrics, but I write all of them now. I just take the negative things in life and write about it and get it all out.

What are your stage shows like?

Intense - we just go off! A lot of local or unsigned acts don't have stage presence but we pride ourselves on that. We want to give people their money's worth, both musically and performance-wise. I have seen so many good bands that have no onstage presence and it makes for a boring show. We try to get the crowd into it. We adore our fans and love to see them get into it.

What are some of your favorite albums?

AT THE GATES - *Terminal Spirit Disease and Slaughter of the Soul*, all COLDPLAY and ATREYU albums, KILLSWITCH ENGAGE - *Alive or Just Breathing*, AVENGED SEVENFOLD - *Sounding The Seventh Trumpet*, SOILWORK - *Natural Born Chaos*, BOTCH - *We are the Romans*, BESTIARY - *The Murder Wheel*.

How do you feel* One Last Taste Of Temptation *compares to your last album?

It's an improvement, definitely. We have taken a very large step since BTDW. We are not as confined to just melodic metal. We have dabbled with different things such as acoustic interludes, piano, more breakdowns, just more aggression in general. We wrote this album as a whole and with a different approach. When Tim was in the band he and Ben did the majority of the writing. Tim was a riff machine and could come up with songs in one practice. With Tim gone we had to come up with a different formula. We did the majority of the writing at our own homes, recorded it and brought it to the table that way. We nit-picked at things and made sure we were all happy with what we were hearing. A lot of the material on BTDW was written while I was still in SOMBER, the lyrics and vocal lines already set. I got to write and arrange the lyrics and patterns of most of the stuff on *One Last Taste Of Temptation*. I feel we have matured our sound and are still defining it. We are still a fairly new band to the scene; just over two years last month. We are growing and it's good!

What is the Michigan scene like?

Well some people say, "Oh, its awful!" but I think it's not that bad. Especially here in Lansing. There are a few good places to play and kids come out. They don't support just certain bands either. When I do a show the kids come early and stick around for ALL the bands. There's so many good Michigan-based bands, too. There's some areas where the scene sucks...like Flint, but there's others that are pretty good like Kalamazoo, Traverse City, Saginaw, Grand Rapids. I like Michigan! It's been good to me the seven years I've been involved in the metal and hardcore scene.

What is the best guitar solo of all time, in your opinion?

Man, that's a tough one... I wish Briant was here to answer this one. Well, I really dig all the solos on the ARCTURUS *Aspera Hiems Symfonia* album. August is such an amazing guitarist. His work with the band WINDS is absolutely phenomenal.

What are your future plans?

Our future plans are to keep up the momentum. We have been doing great and have accomplished more in two years than most unsigned bands have in, say, five to ten years. We have a great manager who has worked very hard for us, promoting, setting up tours and whatnot. We will continue to write and record albums and maybe eventually shop for a good label that will get us some tour support, more distribution, licensing. Just gotta keep progressing!

What equipment do you use?

Line 6 for our guitars. We are between bassists, but Bob used Line 6 also. They make a great-sounding amp. Ben uses Tama drums and Sabian symbols. Tony has a Gibson Les Paul Gothic and a Jackson V. Briant also uses Jackson Guitars.

What are you reading right now?

I have been reading a lot of underground zines. I finished Henry Rollins' *Get in the Van* on the last tour. It's a great book and I think all musicians should read it. It makes what bands go through nowadays look like five-star treatment compared to the shit he went through with BLACK FLAG.

If you could tour with anyone who would it be and why?

Well, if it could be anyone I would say an AT THE GATES/CARCASS reunion tour. Those are both bands that are huge influences on us and many other melodic bands that are out lately. It would be such a big tour, the exposure would be unbelievable!!

In your opinion, what is the best horror movie kill of all time?

The lawn mower scene in *Dead Alive*. Great fucking horror flick!!

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SKINLESS

BY ADAM SAGAN

IN THE WORLD OF DEATH METAL, SUCCESS DOES NOT COME EASILY. IT DOESN'T HAPPEN EASILY, AND INDEED, FOR MANY BANDS, IT NEVER COMES. TOO MANY BANDS ARE ALL TOO EAGER TO GET THEIR NAME PLUGGED OR THEIR RECORD SPUN ON A COLLEGE RADIO STATION, BUT TOO FEW BANDS HAVE THE WORK ETHIC, THE DETERMINATION OR THE MUSICAL CAPABILITIES TO RISE ABOVE THE REST. ENTER **SKINLESS**. INARGUABLY ONE OF THE HARDEST WORKING BANDS IN METAL, THESE FOUR INDIVIDUALS (SHERWOOD WEBBER-VOCALS; NOAH CARPENTER-GUITAR; JOE KEISER-BASS; AND NEWCOMER JOHN LONGSTRETH-DRUMS) ARE SHOWING THE REST OF THE PACK WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO BE SUCCESSFUL. OPENLY EMBRACING THE ALL-TOO-FORGOTTEN ATTITUDE OF PLAYING SHOWS ANYWHERE, ANYTIME, GIVING 100% AT EVERY SHOW - BE IT FOR 50 OR 5,000 PEOPLE, HONING THEIR SKILLS AND SETTING THE STANDARDS EVER-HIGHER, NEVER AFRAID TO DO WHAT THE OTHER GUY WON'T, **SKINLESS** IS CRUSHING ALL THAT STAND IN THEIR WAY, JOINING AN ELITE GROUP OF BANDS WHO CONSISTENTLY SET THE PACE FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW.

Pit:* SKINLESS *is back with a new album, a new drummer, and loads of technical insanity. How does it feel to have the record out and be back out on the road again?

Noah Carpenter: It feels good. John's been doing a great job. He joined in the middle of January. We had to bust our ass, get all the new songs ready. We recorded the album in February, then (went) immediately off on a European tour, so it was kind of hectic from the minute he came out. He came out all the way from Kansas to New York and busted our ass for two months straight.

Wow. That's not much time for you to adjust, John.

John Longstreth: I feel great though. I'm ready to record another album already.

***Before joining up with* SKINLESS, *you came from ANGELCORPSE and ORIGIN, easily two of the most proficient and technical bands of their style. How did you have to change your style when you started grooving with* SKINLESS?**

JL: I don't think I've played a groove beat or anything groovy for the past five or six years actually, so coming into that was the hard part - learning how to slow down. And it's still kind of tough. But it was a welcome change. I needed it. I needed to be able to go back and start playing more drummer-oriented things than trying to mimic the drum machine, a very common habit in lots of today's drummers, which is something else I'm also still into. But as far as **SKINLESS** is concerned, it's been a huge learning experience, being able to learn how to play a different kind of metal.

Have you found that you've been getting back to your jazz style?

JL: In some situations. Maybe not jazz, but there's some funk things going on that I never expected that I'd be able to use in **ORIGIN.** There's a lot more room in the **SKINLESS** construct to play around. The song writing is a lot more wide open. I'm not blocked down to every single note.

NC: It also gives us a whole new element. Before we were a mid-pace groove band, but John coming in gives us that extra speed burst that we need sometimes. It's able to expand musically what we've been able to do before.

Do you find that you're playing faster now?

NC: Yeah, we're playing faster. We can still do that slow groove stuff, but when we want to do that fast shit, it's there for us. It opens up new doors for us musically. It enables us to be a little more creative in the writing process, because we have that extra attack that we never did before.

Prior to John joining, you had George Torres drumming with you for a while. He was a great drummer, and he was really excited to be playing with you guys. What happened?

NC: What happened with George was he lost his job in the terrorist attacks. He wanted to get away from the city for a while and joined **SKINLESS**. But I don't think his heart was really into it from the beginning. He's a great guy, a great drummer, but he had a kid in the city, and he's trying to live in upstate NY and tour at the same time. I think it was too much for him. I think he got stressed out and it didn't end up working out. He had a lot going on. He helped us out for a good year. I think we kicked ass with George, but in the end, he had to move on, and so did we.

John isn't the only thing new about the new album.* From Sacrifice to Survival *is full of dark, militant music and very relevant, political lyrics. Gone are the funny gore/porn lyrics and the clever sound clips that you guys are well known for. There are even a couple of clean vocal lines that Joe throws down on some songs. What's going on?

NC: Well, as far as the silly lyrics, we actually haven't done that in five or six years. It appears on *Foreshadowing…* and *Progression…* because they were old songs re-recorded for those albums. They weren't written in the time those albums came out. The new songs written for those albums are actually kind of serious too. All the silly songs were written in like '94 or '95. We just happened to dig them out and re-do them for those albums. People think we've all of a sudden become serious, but we've actually been serious since like '97.

Are people reacting to it pretty positively?

NC: It's been overwhelmingly positive. I think I've seen one negative review so far. Somebody just busted on every aspect of it, from Neil Kernon to the clean vocals.

JL: It was the anti-progression of **SKINLESS**. They didn't like the progression.

NC: It was a dirty diaper day for that person. I think for most other people that reviewed it, it's been a very refreshing change for them, because there's so many death metal bands. I think it's really stale, how a lot of death metal bands sound the same. We didn't want to be stuck in the middle of all that. We wanted to do a couple of different things that maybe set us apart, but not like selling out - just adding a couple of different elements. The clean vocals take up maybe ten seconds of the whole album. I added some more classic metal riffs, because that's what I listen to mainly, IRON MAIDEN, JUDAS PRIEST and the old shit.

I saw that on your thanks list.

NC: Right. I wanted to add more elements like that in there. There's even some clean guitar intro to the one song, something I wrote ten years ago on acoustic. I decided to throw that in, just to do some different things. I dug it out and was listening to it one day. I was like, "that's pretty cool. I can probably work with that." I fit it in to work with the title track. I think it came out cool. It's good to have peaks and valleys in the album - make each song stand out on its own and not have it sound the same from start to finish, you know?

"A False Sense of Security" is the song we're talking about. That's another side of* SKINLESS. *It's extremely well done, and it fits very well into the album, but if I heard it on its own, I would never in a million years guess it was a* SKINLESS *song.

NC: I wanted to dig for new elements. I wanted to keep what was good about the band, yet add some new, interesting things, and maybe catch people by surprise.

Was that along the same lines as recording with Neil Kernon?

NC: I'm a big fan of his work, and we've been talking to him for a while now, trying to make this happen. He approached us, and really likes what we do and wanted to capture our live sound on an album. He just seemed like the nicest guy. I'm a fan of his work, the old **QUEENSRŸCHE** and **NEVERMORE** stuff. He's worked on a lot of great stuff.

A lot of the technical, classical guitar players…

NC: Yeah, I couldn't see any reason not to get him in there. He was absolutely the best.

(To John) This is your first time recording with Neil too, correct?

JL: Yeah, and it was the most positive recording experience I've ever encountered. I mean, it tells you a lot…when you have to record an album, it's a big, stressful thing. But when you bring the producer in the room and all of a sudden everybody's smiling, that's a good sign. He actually made it fun and really easy. He has an extremely intense work ethic, and he didn't even utter one ounce of frustration the entire time.

NC: He knows how to get the best out of every individual in the band. He knows how to keep them calm. If you get frustrated, you can't play and just want to smash your guitar down or whatever. He knew how to keep everyone on an even keel.

JL: It was so easy to keep your cool with him in the room.

NC: He would go for 15 hours straight, and he'd be on the same level. I never saw an ounce of frustration in the guy. When you have to do it 20 times, and you're like, "Fuck, I can't play it", he was always just like "one more time," and then you got it.

In your thanks list, you thanked the Milwaukee Metal Fest, March Metal Meltdown, Chicago Death Fest, Maryland Death Fest, and the New England Metal and Hardcore Fest. Here we are back in Milwaukee. You guys have crushed everyone all night, and at the same time, there has been the smallest crowd this festival has ever seen to crush. So now that you guys have had experience with these other festivals, what is it like to come back here to Milwaukee and hang out here and rip up this fest again?

JL: Wait till what's his name puts the New England Metal Fest in Milwaukee in the Eagles Ballroom next year.

That seems to be the popular rumor. Same weekend and everything.

JL: Milwaukee's always fun, though, regardless.

NC: Tonight I think we had a very positive response. It was very beneficial for us to come through, whether it's the lowest attendance or whatever. I think we personally had a good time and a good response to our set.

Well, you used everything to your advantage. Nobody else went up there and used both of those stages next to each other like you guys did.

NC: Well, Sherwood's the man. He knows how to work it so everyone's got front row.

Joe wasn't a stranger to the other side either.

NC: My cord couldn't quite reach the other side, but I saw Joe going back and forth.

JL: Joe went on the other stage too?

NC: Yeah, he was pacing the whole time.

You guys just did a string of dates in Japan with NILE and NAGLFAR. Most of the big, popular heavy metal bands over there are the happy Scandinavian bands, like IN FLAMES, SOILWORK, CHILDREN OF BODOM, etc. Going over there with that type of a package, what type of crowd did you see? How did the fans react to that?

JL: They were the best crowds ever.

NC: (in a lovingly joking Japanese tone) "Vewy excited! Supa Cool! Skinwess!"

They love it!

JL: All three shows were sold out. Every night, there was a huge meet and greet, and I've never signed so many things in my life.

NC: We were signing CD players, cell phones, the most ridiculous shit. They are the most hospitable people in the world. They're really excellent. We got taken care of over there, treated like kings. And (they have) very nice venues.

Well, you've conquered North America, the Far East…

NC: South America! We want to hit Australia also. And we haven't really done a full tour of Europe, like Spain, Greece, Italy. There's still a lot of work to be done over there. We've done Belgium, Holland, Germany, The Czech Republic, France and England. There's still some other areas to hit there. And we definitely want to hit South America and Australia.

Does it look like it might happen?

NC: Yeah, there are possibilities. We're working on an Australian tour for maybe next year.

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RELAPSE RECORDS RELEASE

TYPE O NEGATIVE

BY MICHA KITE

THE AURAL MURAL THAT **TYPE O NEGATIVE** CUSTOMARILY PAINTS IS DISMAL, DISTRAUGHT AND DESPONDENT BUT SPLASHED WITH AN ELEMENTAL SENSE OF HUMOR. YOU EITHER GET THE JOKE OR THE JOKE GETS YOU. SEEMINGLY IT'S OK TO BE A MOROSE MOTHERFUCKER IF AT THE END OF THE DAY YOU CAN STILL LAUGH AT YOURSELF, AT LEAST THAT'S HOW **TYPE O** SEES IT. CARNAL INIQUITY FOR COMEDIC CONSEQUENCE TAKES US ON ANOTHER GRAND TOUR OF LIFE'S MAUSOLEUM.

At times the album delves back into its pre-Bloody Kisses basis, finding the lead guitars and keyboards taking a backseat to a punkier preceding. "I think a lot of it had to do with a state of mind. Some of the songs for instance "I Like Goils" didn't start out that way at all but after experimenting with different things such that's what it became. It wasn't any kind of conscious effort to put up-tempo songs on this record and was all by accident to be honest with you. Peter pretty much wanted to get an overall wash and didn't want everything to have a stripped down identity like it did on "World Coming Down". He wanted more layers and textures."

Survival in life is about variance, growth and nurturing ones needs. From an optimistic point of view it's easy to see how the pessimists corner themselves only to kindle never-ending conflict. "A few of the songs on this record it seems pretty obvious that the tongue is firmly in the cheek and that's how we've always approached life in general. It's like a tragic comedy. I never really thought of the matter as trying to make someone understand what we're about. It's more if you're capable of identifying with it then great and hopefully you'll be able to laugh with us. If I have to explain it to somebody then it's really not even worth having them aboard (laughter). If you have to explain everything it becomes taxing. Sometimes Pete will say something and I'll fall apart but you see a lot of people with this expression on their face like "ok, what's next" as if it flies right over their heads. When we play at home it seems like a lot of people get it and the British get it (laughter). They really understand that dry wit. These lyrics are dealing with Peter's personal demons and having a few laughs. The sad part of it is Pete comes from a large family and he's the youngest and nature's taking its course. A lot of his family have passed away over the years with people getting old and getting sick so he's having a tough time with that. That's the unfortunate part and the songs pretty much reflect that. "Nettie" is about his mom, "The Dream Is Dead" I believe is about his father, "I Like Goils" is pretty self-explanatory (laughter), "Angry Inch" is a cover and it seems that in Europe nobody knows that. It's from a traveling play called "Hedwig And The Angry Inch", that they ended up making a movie out of. A brief scenario, its kinda somewhere in between "Rocky Horror" and "Spinal Tap" and its about a guy from Eastern Bloc Berlin who gets a sex change to get out of the country and it all goes bad. It's a great musical and I got to see the play a couple of years ago and have the DVD. Just the whole thing with the super machismo image that the band portrays with Peter being in Playgirl and us now singing this song I find the irony uncanny."

Fans of Roadrunner's roster have inevitably read of artists dissatisfaction with the label and, while it's heavily rumored that this is* TYPE O*'s final album for the company, Johnny believes its all about how you look at the big picture. "Right now we're seeing what's being offered to us and nobody's really jumping on anything right away, its more like we're free agents. We're seeing who will offer what and who has the best interest in the band and whether it's Roadrunner or not is yet to be seen. Peter signed a contract and it's pretty incredible that we've outlasted it. We could be sitting in a completely different position a year from now, but we'll have to wait and see. I imagine any band isn't going to be completely happy with their record company. Artists are artists and record companies are businessmen, they're not a charity organization. They have a roster and it's a lot about finance and not a lot about art. Yes I think there are a million things Roadrunner could have done better for us but there are also things that we could've done to maximize our opportunity that we didn't do. To sit and point fingers at this point isn't even worth it and I try and learn from past mistakes."

In past discussions Mr. Steele couldn't envision himself rocking the masses into his forty's which weighs out the question of the bands longevity. "There has always been a gray cloud that travels over the bands head with the feeling that it could end at any minute. With that in mind you really don't look that far into the future to begin with. If Pete doesn't want to make music anymore than so be it and I'll cross that bridge when I get to it. I've been listening to him for years say how he doesn't want to do this anymore and then here we go again for another tour, record and everything repeats itself. We're all sitting there complaining about the same things over and over again but we're still doing it. At this point I think this is the only thing that we know how to do and we're too afraid to try and do something else.

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GUARDIANS OF THE FLAME

BY MARK KADZIELAWA

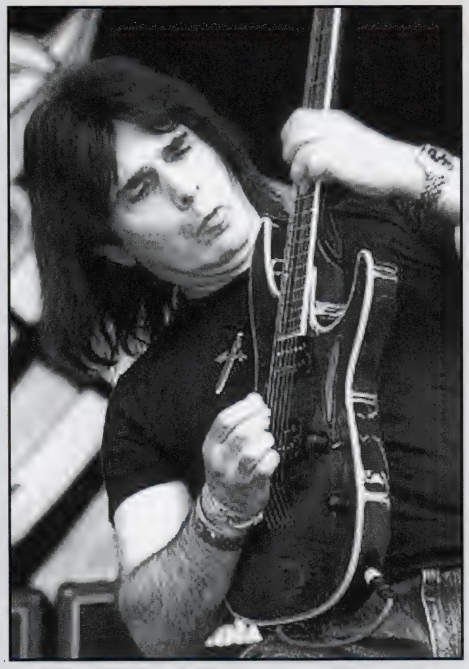
JACK STARR IS A LEGENDARY PERFORMER. HE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR FORMING **VIRGIN STEELE**, AND RELEASING COUPLE OF EXCELLENT ALBUMS UNDER **BURNING STARR**. AFTER COUPLE OF YEARS OF NOT DOING ANYTHING JACK DECIDED THE TIME WAS RIGHT TO RE-JOIN THE SCENE. NOT ONLY DID HE RE-JOIN, HE GOT ANOTHER GREAT PERSONALITY INVOLVED, SINGER SHMOULIK AVIGAL OF **PICTURE** FAME. HE FORMED **GUARDIANS OF THE FLAME** AND RELEASED UNDER A SAVAGE SKY. THE NEW ALBUM IS EASILY A STRONG CONTENDER FOR HEAVY METAL ALBUM OF THE YEAR. THE MATERIAL IS EXCELLENT, AND SO IS THE DELIVERY.

Pit: What did you do over the last few years?

Jack Starr: During my inactivity I was playing blues in the Stevie Ray Vaughn style and playing clubs in my local area of Long Island. Basically I got turned off to the metal scene and the whole whiny Seattle crap that had taken over metal in the nineties. I didn't realize that the metal I loved still existed in Europe and bands that valued musicianship and melody as well as balls had an audience. Now I see that power metal is alive and well and there are some great new bands out there, some of whom were influenced by my first metal band **VIRGIN STEELE**. I think the turning point for me was when my son Julien told me about a great new band he heard called HAMMERFALL. Upon listening I realized that this was the same great music that I played and the themes and stories they wrote about were similar to what I had written many years earlier. I knew that if bands like them and RHAPSODY were popular there would be an audience for me also. So around 1997, I got together with my former singer Dave Defeis and made some tapes that we called the *Sacred Demos*. These got me a deal with a wonderful Greek label called Cult Metal Classics and things have been going great since. I decided to get back to the front because I had a reawakening and realized that what defines me as a person is my ability to play and write songs. I have dedicated a great part of my life to that and, without sounding melodramatic, I really feel empty if I don't play. I love to perform for people so for me there was no other choice. I had to get back. Music has the power to save me from myself and erase the depression and negativity that sometimes attacks me. I like myself when I play. I am never dishonest when I play and I think that people can sense that and feel that what I play is heartfelt. One time I read a quote about Eddie Van Halen and a friend who was quoted said "take away his guitar and he is nothing, and without that guitar he has no personality." When I read that I understood and did not see it as an insult to Eddie but rather as a confirmation of the importance of music to Eddie. If you have listened to some of Eddie's solos and have been moved, then you were moved by Eddie. You cannot detach the artist from the art. If someone wants to know me it's the same thing. It's there in almost every piece of music that I have ever put out. I think a good musician does music because he has to, there is no other choice. Music saves him and maybe he can save others with this power. That's why I have returned. I have to.

How did you put these players together? Did you plan to get certain people?

I had a plan to get great players that I like as people so I thought why not get the guys from my first band, BURNING STARR. I called up Joe Hasselvander, who left my band to join RAVEN. I then called Ned Meloni who after seeing his picture playing with Joe Lynn Turner realized that he had not aged one day. When I talked to him it was like we were back in 1984 and it felt great. We needed a singer so we decided to call a friend of ours named Shmoulik, who had been the singer for the RODS and before that PICTURE. Shmoulik agreed and we all got together in Florida at the bass players house. I will always remember walking into the room that was to be my bedroom. When I looked on the wall, it was decorated with my old



album covers that he had placed to make me feel welcome. So we started rehearsing some tunes that I had written and slowly we realized that this was not a project but we were a band. As the weeks passed by we all grew comfortable with each other and everyone put their input in the songs and our unique style was created. I am quite pleased that things have worked out so well and now we are getting ready to do a second album.

What plans do you have once the album is released in the U.S.?

After the album is released in the U.S we will start the first of many tours in support of this record. The plans are to start in the Midwest, which has always been the area of our country most receptive to metal, and from there we will branch out. As far as Europe, we are in the process of arranging festival appearances for next summer.

You initially got in touch with me regarding some comments David Defeis of* VIRGIN STEELE *made. Present your side of the story.

Yes it's true that David Defeis made some negative comments about me in print. Of course it was hurtful especially considering the fact that I gave him his break and taught him a great deal about the business from the songwriting process. I hired him for my band which already existed, and that band was called **VIRGIN STEELE**. Dave needs to be grateful to me and not petty. I wrote the majority of the first two albums. This is a fact Dave tries to hide. On the *Book of Burning* and the four new songs I wrote, Dave maybe contributed 20 percent. One song in particular, "The Final Days," I wrote 100 percent by myself. In fact Dave did not like it. He and his sidekick, the owner of some local studio, did not even want to finish it!! I had to plead for a mix to take place because they thought it was not a good song. Now I read interviews where Dave analyzes the lyrics and acts like he wrote it. That pisses me off. I did notice that on his website some of the fans wrote in and said that particular song was very unlike the rest of the new **VIRGIN STEELE.** It had a much angrier attitude and they liked it. I would have liked him to be a man and give credit where credit is due, but I guess that would be hard for someone with a huge ego like his. I want to make one thing clear. There is no **VIRGIN STEELE.** There are Dave Defeis solo albums. He tells everyone what to play. My album is closer to the original sound of the band than any of the recent albums. The first albums that I made with **STEELE** and the EP are excellent examples of early metal and I am happy that we were an influence on some of the power metal bands of today like HAMMERFALL and RHAPSODY. I also remember James Hetfield telling me he thought "Children of the Storm" off of **VIRGIN STEELE** was a great song.

Is your back catalogue available?

In regards to the older albums, everything that I have ever done has been reissued on CD. Some of the albums have been reissued twice so the music is out there, even if it takes a little effort to find it.

There is one DVD coming out on the Frontline label from Brazil and it is part of a CD package called the *Best of BURNING STARR*. That should be out next year.

So, what's the bottom line for you Jack?

Heavy music will never die because people will always want a powerful and honest music that they can express their emotions with. It does the body good like milk.

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DIXIE WITCH

BY MICHA KITE

SIMILAR TO THE LYRICS OF "GOIN' SOUTH", I'VE ALWAYS HAD THIS THING FOR TEXAS AND EVERYTHING THAT GOES WITH IT. YOU'VE GOT THE GULF WITH ITS KILLER SURF ACTION AND FISHING, TEXAS BARBECUE AND TEX MEX GRUB, LONE STAR AND SHINER BOCK BEER AND HOT BLONDES AND DARK LATINA'S WITH ALL THEIR SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY. ADD THIS WITH A MIX OF GREAT FRIENDS AND WHAT MORE COULD YOU ASK FOR? THANKFULLY **DIXIE WITCH** IS A GROUP OF FELLAS THAT I NOT ONLY AM A FAN OF, BUT ALSO CONSIDER KIN.

Pit: I've heard that the title* One Bird, Two Stones *in a nutshell is about the hell you endured to release your second album. To me it seems as if y'all have been met with nothing but acclaim from fans and press alike.

Clayton Mills: It's kind of a happy accident, as we couldn't think of an album title. We had about twenty that none of us could agree on and *One Bird, Two Stones* is something Trinidad said in the studio. We all laughed and started thinking about it as the one bird would be **DIXIE WITCH** and the two stones would be our two records. After *Into the Sun* we pretty much had a verbal agreement with Man's Ruin Records and the contract in the mail. We took off on tour and in the midst of that Man's Ruin folded. Also during that tour we were getting courted by Sub Pop and we met with them and went home thinking we had a deal. All of a sudden we called them up to find out the guy we were talking with got canned while we were on the road. For the next year we talked with everyone. The record industry in 2002 kinda fell apart for a while. Labels were low on money, people getting music off the internet and with the post 9/11 thing the economy went to shit. We couldn't find a label to give us what we wanted which really wasn't that much. We just wanted someone to put the record out and provide a good recording. Then we had two labels promising things that changed the original deal we had with them and so we didn't go with either of those. To make a long story short, the first time I talked with Scott at Small Stone he was interested but really busy, and the second time he was like "man, I'll throw a check in the mail tomorrow". So far Small Stone has been great to deal with.

Besides going out to sell and promote the record you guys seem to enjoy touring.

We did fifty shows in eight weeks with a few days off in Texas and then we headed out west for three weeks. We wanted to make an impact with this tour and play every place we could get a gig. We wanted to hit some new places we hadn't been. When you got a new record out you have to play as much as you can. The partying and seeing the friends that we only see while on tour is a good reason for me. I really enjoy that we have friends in every town we play. In a rock and roll show you don't get a whole lot of time to hang out with people but it's awesome to show up in a town and have friends there.

I've heard that many bands going back to playing knock down drag out rock don't sell that many records.

I think it's because a lot of bands don't get out on the road enough. It's tough to go out on the road. You have to have a job to go home to or just don't give a fuck and go out anyway, which was our situation this time around. We knew we could get work when we came back and we said fuck it and went. You sell a lot more CD's that way and I think that with a lot of bands, if they would get out there and tour a little more, they would find themselves selling a lot more than just sticking to their region.

What's up with the split you got coming out with THE BROUGHT LOW?

We haven't decided what songs to put on there yet and we're going to wait and see how the next couple of weeks go as we have some Texas shows that we're hoping to test out the new songs. We may even do a cover, which we have several ideas for, plus Small Stone wants to re-release *Into the Sun* and we're trying to figure out what kind of bonus material to put on there…

Is it out of print?

Yeah it's out of print right now, and Small Stone may want to re-release that with some new artwork and some new songs. Maybe some live stuff as we play the song "Into the Sun" significantly different than we used to with this kinda ZEPPELIN blues jam in the middle. We may record "She" by KISS but at this time we just don't know. We're even talking with another guy about releasing a live album. We're still a new band so the more product we put out there, the more **DIXIE WITCH** interest we'll generate

METAL MILITIA

BY JON "K" KONJOYAN

WHAT IS IT WITH FLORIDA AND METAL BANDS? GROUPS AS VARIED AS **CANNIBAL CORPSE** AND EVEN **LIMP BIZKIT** HAIL FROM THE SUNSHINE STATE. NOW COMES **METAL MILITIA**, A HARD WORKING YOUNG BAND FROM FT. LAUDERDALE THAT PROUDLY OWES ITS INFLUENCES TO OLD SCHOOL FAVORITES LIKE **MEGADETH** AND **SLAYER**. ONE LISTEN TO THE SHREDDING GUITAR SOLOS AND RIPPING DRUMS ON THEIR IMPRESSIVE NEW CD, PERPETUAL STATE OF AGGRESSION, AND YOU'D SWEAR THAT SEASONED PROS WERE BEHIND THE THRASH METAL MADNESS, NOT TEENAGERS. THE **MILITIA** HAVE ALREADY SHOWCASED AT SEVERAL HIGH PROFILE EVENTS, INCLUDING THE MILWAUKEE METAL FEST AND THE EAT'EM CONFERENCE IN LAS VEGAS, GARNERED LOCAL RADIO PLAY (AS WELL AS ON HOTMETALRADIO.COM), AND EARNED NUMEROUS RAVE REVIEWS. AND THEY'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN...

Pit: You guys started this band when some of you were only 13 years old. Was it just for fun then, or were you serious about making music?

Paolo Gregoletto: We were serious from the first time we rehearsed. It just clicked. We all have similar musical influences. Our guitar instructor, Damian Lee Thorr, encouraged us to practice and work hard, and that's what we've done ever since. It's paying off. We are starting to get a lot of attention from some major labels and magazines like Pit. We really appreciate the support.

At what point did you decide to make music a career goal?

After the first time we played live at a local battle of the bands held at the Chili Pepper in Ft. Lauderdale. We competed against 30 bands and won. Just being in front of people and seeing them react to our music was crazy.

Who were your influences then and now?

All of us have different influences ranging from DEATH, old METALLICA, MEGADETH, SLAYER, and HATE ETERNAL. It's a mix really. We also like newer bands out there now like SOILWORK, LAMB OF GOD, MESHUGGAH, and HATEBREED, to name a few. They are really good bands and very technical.

Are there any of the so-called "nu-metal" type bands that you like?

We're really not into the nu-metal bands much.

What's been the best moment or event so far on your musical journey?

There have been a few, but one that really stands out was the Metal Meltdown in New Jersey this past March. The crowd was insane and they really liked our music. We got tons of emails after that weekend. We also have opened for GOD FORBID, OTEP, SWORN ENEMY, and E-TOWN CONCRETE, and those were fun shows too. Recently we learned from our label (Sonic Wave International) that our new CD has received consideration from the 46th Annual Grammys for best rock (metal) album and best performance for one of our songs, "Six String Suicide." That was cool news to get.

What's been the scariest or most nervous moment?

Our first Milwaukee Metal Fest performance last summer was exciting. We were kind of nervous because it was the first time we played in an arena. The stage was huge, but it kicked ass, and we made a lot of new fans.

If you weren't playing metal, what would be your second choice?

That's a tough question. We're metal heads, but we can all read and write music. So really we could play anything, or maybe do session work.

What's the hardest part about doing a band?

We enjoy playing, so that's the easy part. Promoting and doing as many shows as we can all over the country to get our name out there, I guess would be the hard part. But we're lucky to have help from our manager, who is also my mom, so that has been helpful. She tells us where we're playing and we show up ready to play.

Your current CD—was that a labor of love, or a hell of a lot of sweat and toil?

The CD was something we began writing when we were younger, like 15 to 17 years old. It was fun to record and work with John Scrip, who produced the disc for us. We're writing the next CD now, and it's very technical, heavy and fast. We've tested some of the songs out at shows and the response has been good. Some great mosh pits have erupted.

Where do you want to see* METAL MILITIA *in five years?

As a band we really want to tour the world and play everywhere we can. We want to carry the metal torch for our generation and play in huge arenas with thousands of people listening to our music. That would be awesome!

Sonic International Records: www.metalmilitia.cc

INDEPENDENT

SUMMON

BY RYAN BARTEK

IN THE EVENT THAT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE EVER HEARD OF THE WAR MACHINE KNOWN TO THE FREE WORLD AS **SUMMON**, NOW WOULD BE A GREAT TIME TO RUN OUT AND GRAB A COPY OF THEIR LATEST RECORD, AND THE BLOOD RUNS BLACK. PRODUCED BY JAMES MURPHY, AND THE BLOOD RUNS BLACK PRESENTS **SUMMON** MASSACRING ALL OPPOSITION WITH THEIR RAZOR-SHARP HYBRID OF SUPERIOR DEATH/BLACK METAL. **SUMMON** MIX THE BEST ELEMENTS OF BOTH MODERN AND CLASSIC DEATH METAL, ALL THE WHILE PROCREATING A MONSTROUS WALL OF FURIOUS, BLACKENED HELL IN THE VEIN OF **DEATH**, **MORBID ANGEL**, **GOD DETHRONED**, **POSSESSED**, **NECROPHOBIC**, **VENOM** AND **MARDUK**. PIT RECENTLY CAUGHT UP WITH LEAD MADMAN NECROMODEUS TO EXPLORE THE PSYCHOTIC WORLD OF **SUMMON**.

Pit: Since you're new to many of our readers, can you give me a brief history of the band?

Necromodeus: **SUMMON** was formed in 1991 by Xaphan and I to play extreme music for the masses.

To someone who hasn't heard your music before, how would you best describe the band's sound?

TOTAL FUCKING CHAOS!!! Blistering blast beats, demon screeches for vocals, and chainsaw guitars ripping through your eardrums.

What was it like working with James Murphy on the new record?

Working with James was a lot of fun and a great learning experience. I was a fan of James for many years, and it was kind of cool to work with a guy you grew up listening to.

How do you feel* And The Blood Runs Black *compares to your other albums?

It compares to *Baptized By Fire* a lot, except that the production is way better on the new album. The song structures and lyrical content is similar.

What inspires the music/lyrics the most?

Satan, sluts and beer - this is what **SUMMON** is all about. The slut songs are just bashing the little cunts for what they are!!

Where does the band's ideology stand? I know Moribund (your label) is really into Satanism.

SUMMON is into Satanism and hate. Each day it just gets stronger and stronger.

What are some of your favorite albums?

Pretty much anything from POSSESSED, VENOM, BEHERIT, OATH OF BLACK BLOOD, SARCOFAGO, and BLASPHEMY.

What are some of your favorite bands?

I am in to old DARKTHRONE, BLASPHEMY, BESTIAL WARLUST, LYNARD SKYNARD - way too many to list.

What is the best guitar solo of all time, in your opinion?

Off the top of my head, it would have to be the Randy Rhodes solo in "Over The Mountain."

What are you listening to right now?

CORPSEVOMIT - *Raping The Ears Of Those Above*.

What is the Michigan scene like?

The Michigan scene totally fucking sucks. There are only a few bands that I am behind because everyone else is only down for themselves. Fuck everyone else. The only band around here that is worth a fuck is SAURON, who are totally killer thrash. Fuck everyone else, because they don't support the scene; they just support themselves. Selfish fucking bastards.

Any touring plans in the near future? Also, have you made it through the Bible Belt yet?

We just finished the west coast tour with THORNSPAWN and EXCOMMUNION, and it was fucking awesome! We've been through the Bible Belt a few times, and we'll be sure to come through it again. We are going out to California in a couple of months to do a week or so with DEEDS OF FLESH. A few more things are in the works, but I really don't want to talk about them if they don't work out.

If you could tour with anyone who would it be and why?

I think I would like to tour with the old ANGELCORPSE. They are fast as fuck, and they are a hard band to blow away. It would just make us a lot better, because the whole mission in the **SUMMON** camp is to blow away every fucking band live!!

What are your stage shows like?

Very violent, with tons of beers being consumed, and a few spikes to go around.

What are your future plans?

Right now I am recovering from this tour and getting my head back together. We're getting ready to go back into the studio and record another album soon and tour our asses off!

CENTURY MEDIA RECORDS PRESENTS

EXTOL SYNERGY

Their third full-length record, *Synergy*, further showcases the Norwegian quintet's innovative musicianship and unique ability to blend their jazz, progressive and thrash influences throughout each track.

SWEET VENGEANCE NIGHTRAGE

Featuring guitarists Marios Iliopoulos (ex-Exhumation) & Gus G. (Dream Evil, Mystic Prophecy), ex-At The Gates/The Crown vocalist Tomas Lindberg, Tom S. Englund (Evergrey) on clean vocals, the infamous Per M. Jensen (The Haunted), and bassist Brice Leclercq, *Sweet Vengeance* is a cascade of repressed rage finally given life, filled with fists of sound dedicated to retribution.

NORTHER MIRROR OF MADNESS

This Finnish quintet's second full-length albuum, *Mirror of Madness*, sees the group adding in more abrasive modern death/black elements, while retaining their old-school traditional metal sound. The fury and sheer frantic energy will leave any lister in awe.

SWAMPSONG KALMAH

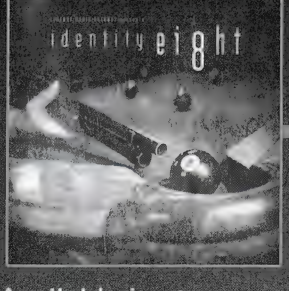
Swampsong is a nine-track blast of Finnish melodic insanity that will leave fans of Children of Bodom and In Flames foaming at the mouth.

LABYRINTH

Their fourth full-length release, simply titled *Labyrinth*, offers 10 flawlessly executed tracks of aggressively melodic metal in its purest form. With power and melody similar to *No Limits* and *Return To Heaven Denied*, this album will have all metal fans foaming at the mouth.

WHY? MERCURY TIDE

Rising from the ashes of ANGEL DUST, MERCURY TIDE is the new band from: Dirk Thurisch (ex-ANGEL DUST), Anders Iwers (TIAMAT, CEMETARY), Stefan Gemballa (FLOWING TEARS), Bernd Aufermann (ex-ANGEL DUST, RUNNING WILD). This 11-track epic distances itself from the power metal affiliation, as it encorporates more atmospheric rock elements into already progressive sound.



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CENTURY MEDIA

Pit: People always talk about wanting to see honest lyrics. But honest lyrics aren't always pretty. They're not always going to please everyone.

Billy Milano: If you try to please your critics, then you're never going to please yourself. I do music because it's my art form. The fact that people buy my music is hilarious. Look, I'm a very humble guy, unlike what everyone thinks. But when I go out, I put on fucking Hulk Hogan, bro. It's (like) wrestling. It's entertainment. You've got to be the persona you've built. And so at the end of the day when I go home, I don't go home dressed to wrestle.

Have you ever come across any fan or critic that feels let down or over-joyed (over the fact) that you make that distinction between who you are on your records and who you are...

As a human being? People are a little taken back at first, because they don't know when I'm playing it up. They don't understand that I am a human being. I play with my dogs like they're children. I'm not this guy that they break out of a coffin. I'm very social-political (and I'm) on top of current events. I study theology. People resent the fact that I'm educated. And I have the balls to back up what I say not only with my mind but (also) with my fists.

You're interested in theology?

Absolutely. I've always been fascinated about religion, and what it signifies metaphorically. I don't really believe in God or anything. I'm from a family of Masons, and I follow Masonic beliefs.

Is there a particular religion that you're more inclined to read up on?

Na. They're all interesting to me. I've read parts of the Quran. I lived in a squat for three years with two friends of mine who were down the hall. They were black Muslims. Everyone thinks I hate blacks and Muslims, which is horse-

MOD

BY JAY GORANIA

"I'M THE PERSON THAT EVERYONE FEARS, BECAUSE I REPRESENT EVERYTHING THAT EVERYONE'S AFRAID TO SAY." BILLY MILANO STIRRED CONTROVERSY DUE TO HIS POINTED, UNRESTRAINED LYRICAL APPROACH WHILE **EMINEM** WAS STILL IN DIAPERS. HE WAS PART OF THE COMEDIC, PC-FREE, HARDCORE/METAL CROSSOVER METAL ACT **SOD** THAT HAS INSPIRED AND TROUBLED SO MANY THROUGH JUST A PAPER-THIN CATALOGUE OF WORK. WITH **MOD**, WHO HAVE JUST RELEASED REBEL YOU LOVE TO HATE, THE MAN'S PERSONAL MUSICAL LEGACY STRETCHES FORWARD, THOUGH HE'S PROVEN HIMSELF AS A PRODUCER AND MANAGER IN THE UNDERGROUND MUSIC INDUSTRY AS WELL.

shit. They were the ones who made me write "Wigga." "Oh, Billy, you've got to write this song. We hate these white kids acting black." They were begging me, and I was laughing, "Ha! Ha! See, you guys built this beast! I didn't!" But they were cool about it. So I did that song as a result of them asking me to.

(laughs) Billy Milano has a problem with wiggers?

That's damn right! But this record is not meant to be taken at face value. The lyrics are metaphoric. And everything has a parody feel to it. The song "Wigga" is about these white kids acting like they're from the ghetto when they're from the suburbs. It's ridiculous! People act like that because they have no identity or role model in their life. What's the role model? MTV. MTV is Big Brother. It's worse than the fucking government. And yet at the end of the day, all I give a fuck about is making people laugh.

There's the paradox – you're pushing the fun factor of the record and your persona, but at the same time, the album has that deep satire throughout. It's a difficult balance. How did you pull that off? It really is deeper that people give it credit for.

It's because I'm smart. I'm above average. This is not a little kid's record, Jay. This is a thinking person's record. Yes, it's fun, entertaining (and) written with a sense of irony and satire, but there is *much* thought gone into each song, even musically. It sits with *Speak English Or Die* as the best record I've done. It blows away *Bigger Than The Devil*.

I'm playing devil's advocate, and posing my own view, but don't you agree that someone has the right to have an opposing view to the war? I never read his statements, but you've blasted* SYSTEM OF A DOWN*'s singer for his views on the war and terrorism.

Opposing views don't bother me. People have the right to believe whatever they want. But let me explain something to you. I would've had no problem with what he said if his letter addressed about the September 11th attack wasn't on September 11th! He didn't say, "What a tragedy! This is horrible! All these innocent people died." He just said that this is what we get for our foreign policies. He had no compassion whatsoever. But the truth was this: if he honestly believed what he said, when his record label said to him, "You have to issue a statement (of apology)," I would have told my label, "Fuck you! Don't tell me what to do! You work for me. I don't work for you." But he immediately put out a press release apologizing and recanting his statement. Everyone is full of shit! If Hollywood has such distaste for war, stop making movies about it. But wait a minute, when you've got all these millions riding on it you're okay with making it. So fuck them! I hope that Hollywood blows up! Don't preach and then not fucking practice. Boy is my blood boiling!

I don't want to further stoke the fire, but as an* SOD *fan, for insight and clarity, I'm curious as to what happened? Did things basically fall apart because Scott (Ian) didn't tell "Behind The Music's" producers that Danny Lilker was an integral member in* ANTHRAX*'s early days?

I said, "Scott, I'm doing this to help you out. I'm closing my business to (rejoin SOD) for you. I expect to tour and see the world." "Billy, I swear to god I'll do it." I had a management company called Brand X that was doing really well. When I signed the contract, Scott Ian disappeared, true to form. Charlie said SOD has nothing to do with ANTHRAX. So he's lying to himself, because SOD had infinitely more credibility than ANTHRAX ever will. Number two - Scott Ian never called me once for a cup of coffee, for dinner, (or for) anything when he came up to New York. And I find that to be insulting, frankly. *And* he dissed Danny Lilker by not mentioning him on that VH1 special. I called Danny and I'm like, "Dude, he just stole every ounce of credibility that you had and that you deserved to be mentioned for." I just went to see MINISTRY and ANTHRAX was opening for them. They hid on their bus until I left.

Why didn't you use any members of your old lineup for this album? And why didn't it work out with Kevin Talley (death metal drummer extraordinaire)?

I told Kevin Talley that if in ten years he applied himself to some drum theory and understood his instrument, he'd become a monster drummer. You can do what you do extremely well, but fail at doing the same thing in another form. Because you can paint, doesn't mean you can sculpt. I like Kevin Talley as a person. He's got good hands and feat, but death metal is one microcosm in the voice of drumming. As far as having new musicians every record, I have a theory. I was very fortunate to be at the right place at the right time to make a record and build a career. I will cite one good thing Scott Ian said to me. After *Speak English Or Die* he said, "Well, now that we're not doing this, go do something else. I got your foot in the door. Go make something of it." Dude, that was a very profound moment for me. Now when I jam with a band I say, "You've got your foot in the door. Go see what you have to offer now." I've brought 12 musicians into recording. As a result I've had **MOD** (alumni) play for MINISTRY, MINDFUNK, ILL NINO, RHYTHM TRIP and PROPAIN. It's my duty as a musician to carry the torch and hand it to the new blood.

In another facet, then, as a manager or producer, are you interested in working with any particular bands?

I'm working on my Killith Fair. I'm not doing anything but focusing my attention on my friends, this record and the events coming up, which is touring, fucking and drinking.

NUCLEAR BLAST

BEFORE THE MUSIC WORLD FOCUSED ON THE UNFAVORABLE, IT WAS FILLED WITH SEX, DRUGS AND ROCK AND ROLL. IMAGINE IF YOU COULD MELT DOWN YOUR MC5, **SOUNDGARDEN** AND **HELLACOPTERS** CD'S, AND FLAIR EM OUT WITH SOME SPACE DUST. OUT OF ROCKS' BODY SHOP WOULD COME **CAMAROSMITH**, ONE PART PUNK AND ONE PART DESERT WITH ROCK BEING THE KEY INGREDIENT. ALTHOUGH THE FILLMORE WEST AND MAX'S KANSAS CITY ARE LONG GONE THE MYSTICISM STILL REMAINS.

CAMAROSMITH

BY MICHA KITE

Pit: Some of you guys have been in fairly well known bands in the past. Is this a serious gig or are you just trying to have fun?

Ben "Devil" Rew: At first it was just for fun cause ZEKE was still together doing their thing and when they broke up we started to tour. We got a really good response and had 80,000 hits on our web site in two months so we figured that maybe we should roll with it. Now that the record is out we've decided to take it as seriously as it needs to be taken. We're so tongue in cheek about everything and we don't take ourselves seriously but when we play a show, we go in to kick fuckin ass.

Is this a good time for rock and roll?

I think now people are starting to pay more attention to what they like and what gets their motor running instead of what MTV or Mountain Dew is shoving down their throat. I think for a band like us, NASHVILLE PUSSY, SUPERSUCKERS, GAZZA STRIPPERS, HELLACOPTERS or NEBULA it *is* a good time for rock and roll. None of us are trying to or care if we sell a million records. People come out to shows you know? Two or three hundred show up and obviously they like it and that's what is important to us. I think the media, Clear Channel radio, and all the people that try to control music did so to the point that they've desensitized people to what they've tried to do. People don't even pay attention to them anymore and everyone tries to fill that empty part of them that we all look for in music.

Do you feel that what's going on now is in conjunction with what happened in the early 90's?

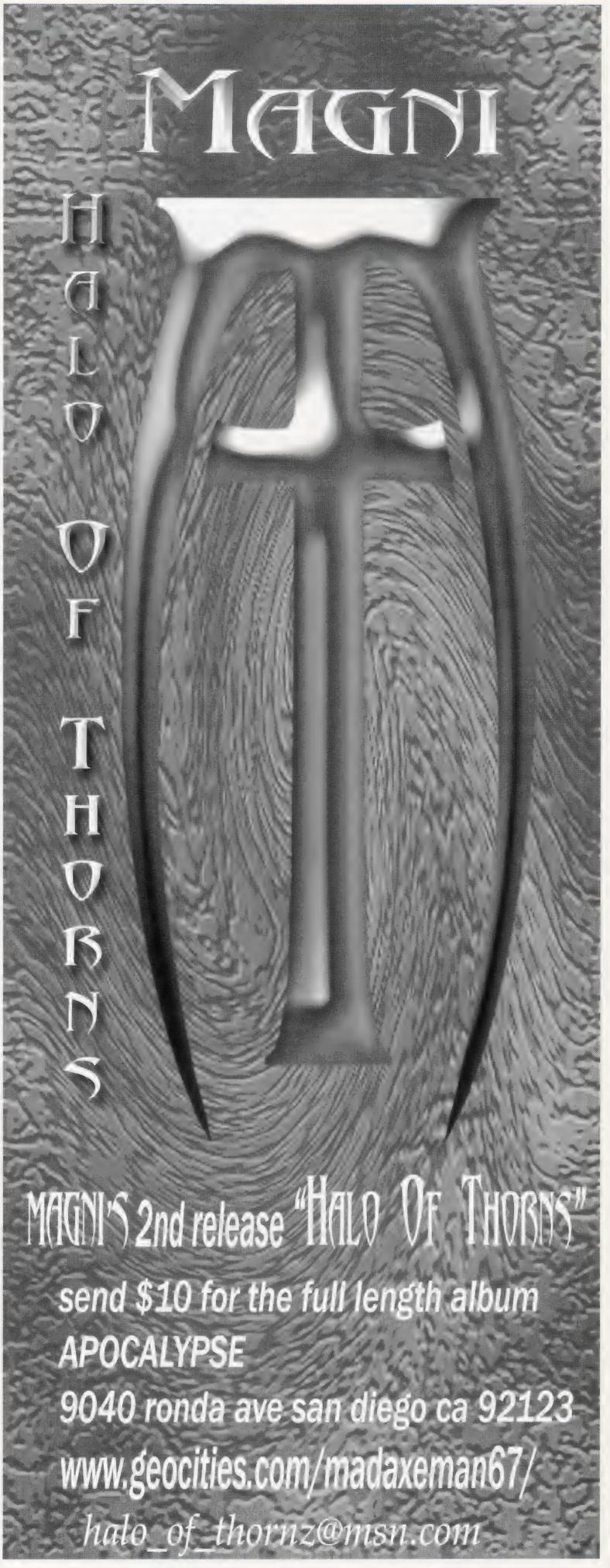
If you remember in the 80's there were bands that sounded good on record and you would go see them live and they sounded like shit. It was obvious that someone played and sang on their records and when the Seattle thing happened you would go see those bands and half of the time they would blow their records out of the water. In the late 90's again you could tell the bands spent six months in the studio and god knows if they even played on it and you go see them live and they're awful. I mean I saw PAPA ROACH and I was offended, but then you see bands like THE HELLACOPTERS or ZEKE and those bands put out and kick ass. I mean who can't say that every SUPERSUCKERS album hasn't gotten better? I think people are into going and seeing bands that kick ass like the 70's. Have you seen the new live ZEPPELIN DVD?

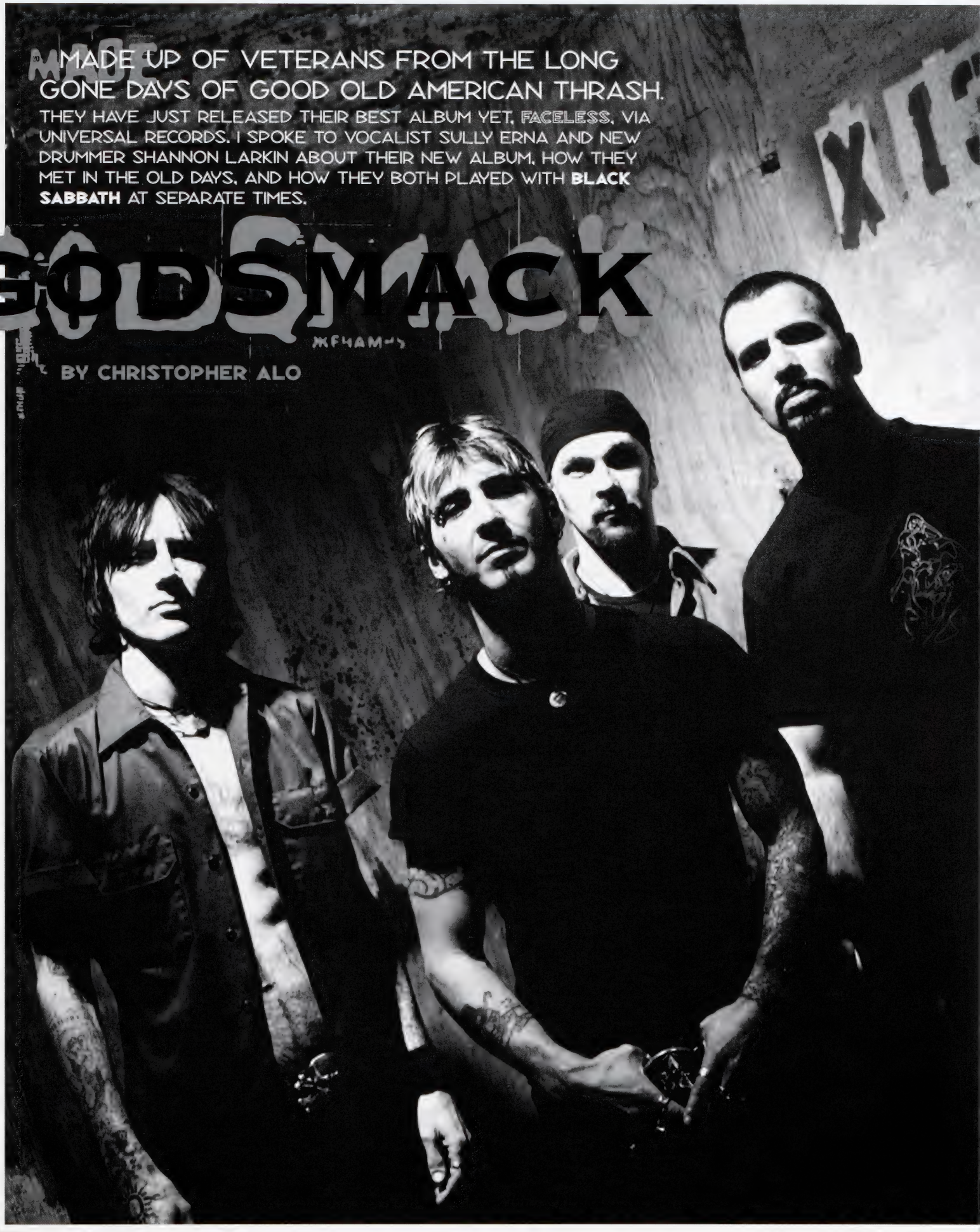
Oh hell yeah...

Yeah, or the BLACK SABBATH show from 1968 or THIN LIZZY "The Boys Are Back In Town"? Those guys kicked *fuckin* ass! Look at the digits (sold) for the GAZZA STRIPPERS or TURBONEGRO...

I heard you guys actually sought out a cease and desist from either AEROSMITH or Chevy?

Again, it goes back to what I was saying about us being tongue in cheek. I think it would be funny if someone paid enough attention to a little band like us, who tours and scrapes together money for their van, owns their label and tries to take care of their other band friends to have the balls when they live in fuckin mansions to come and put a cease and desist on the little guy. That would prove how corporate these people have gotten and the lack of sensitivity towards being a musician. I love AEROSMITH, Steven Tyler and Joe Perry and that was one of the first shows I went to see and I don't think they would ever do that, but it was a joke. With Chevy...Chevy doesn't give a shit. Fuck, if they want us to promote their cars, I own a 78 Camaro.





GODSMACK

MADE UP OF VETERANS FROM THE LONG GONE DAYS OF GOOD OLD AMERICAN THRASH.

THEY HAVE JUST RELEASED THEIR BEST ALBUM YET, FACELESS, VIA UNIVERSAL RECORDS. I SPOKE TO VOCALIST SULLY ERNA AND NEW DRUMMER SHANNON LARKIN ABOUT THEIR NEW ALBUM, HOW THEY MET IN THE OLD DAYS, AND HOW THEY BOTH PLAYED WITH **BLACK SABBATH** AT SEPARATE TIMES.

BY CHRISTOPHER ALO

***Pit: So Shannon you've got quite a resume. How did you wind up in* GODSMACK?**

Shannon Larkin: Well Sully and I first met when I was in WRATHCHILD AMERICA and he was in another band opening up for us in North Carolina. We hit it off as drummers will do and we remained friends. We just stayed in touch over the years. I remember him calling me when **GODSMACK** had the #1 hit on the AOR radio station in Boston and they had just sold 20,000 copies of their demo. They had every major label sniffing around them. Two weeks before that he called me and asked me to join **GODSMACK**, but I told him I had just joined AMEN. We didn't have a record deal, we sure as shit didn't have a #1 song on the radio, but I told Sully I couldn't do it. Ironically enough, four and a half years later I quit AMEN. Two weeks later Sully just calls me to say what's up. So I told him I quit, we talked but I told him to call me when he was serious. Two days later he calls me up to tell me he fired Tommy and I told him that's serious enough for me.

Did Sully fire (original* GODSMACK *drummer) Tommy Stewart just to get you in the band?

Shannon Larkin: No, they just butted heads about everything. And the main thing was musically they were just on a different page because they had different backgrounds.

Well wasn't Tommy Stewart the drummer for LILLIAN AXE?

Shannon Larkin: Yeah, he was (laughs).

So while you were in WRATHCHILD AMERICA, Sully was in another thrash band, MELIAH RAGE? He was in a hair band?

Shannon Larkin: Yeah, they were a poofy band (laughs).

Sully, keeping with the theme of the old days, tell me about your past experiences with MELIAH RAGE. Screaming Ferret just released a CD called "Unfinished Business" by them that features you playing drums. What do you think of it?

Sully Erna: I think it's great! I think the drumming was killer, I was like wow, listen to that little guy go (laughs)! Back then, MELIAH RAGE did a lot of shows with another Massachusetts band called WARGASM. That was so long ago; I don't even remember all the great bands we played with. TESTAMENT, METAL CHURCH, all that great old school metal. It was right before that fucking grunge stuff exploded. At the time all the ANTHRAX and SLAYER stuff was still happening.

The latest* GODSMACK *CD Faceless is amazing. I know you're a big RUSH fan, tell me about the song, "Serenity", that was written about RUSH drummer Neil Peart.

Sully Erna: Thanks; we worked really hard on this record. Neil was a big influence of mine when I was younger. I read his book Ghost Rider and I was just blown away by the whole thing. How someone could survive such tragedies, it was just an amazing story. Tony Rambolo (**GODSMACK** guitarist) had this beautiful piece of acoustic music already done. I contacted Neil Peart, he gave us his blessings, and he liked the song a lot. He wrote me back a letter and said that it was a beautiful song.

I heard that* GODSMACK *were offered both the Ozzfest and the METALLICA tours this summer and you turned them down because you felt the tickets were too high priced. As a fan who still pays for a lot of concert tickets, that's commendable.

Sully Erna: Yeah, well it wasn't entirely that. We have a brand new record and we really want to support it. We had a new stage set built and a killer production and we wanted to do our own thing. So it wasn't totally that, but some of these shows can be really expensive. I mean if I was 16, I don't think I could afford $200.00 for a ticket to the show, a t-shirt and a bottle of water.

Well, both tours are packed with nu-metal bands, which seem to be dying a slow death. I was wondering if it wasn't a calculated move to get* GODSMACK *away from getting lumped in with those bands.

Sully Erna: Exactly. That's exactly right because our first record came out exactly the same time of the KORN's and LIMP BIZKIT's. We were never a nu-metal band, nor do we claim to be. We're just a hard rock band. We play what we feel and what we grew up with. It's BLACK SABBATH and LED ZEPPELIN, that's where our roots lie.

I have a friend who wanted to know why I was going to interview you because she knows that I hate nu-metal, but I told her that* GODSMACK *are anything but nu-metal.

Sully Erna: Well I appreciate that. It's not that we have anything against those types of bands, but at the same time, I don't want to be considered a rap-rock band or a nu-metal band because we're not.

You've just released a great new album, your planning a massive world tour, but you somehow found time to write a book, right?

Sully Erna: I'm doing an autobiography called "Releasing the Demons". I found myself on tour talking to friends and I wound up talking and remembering these amazing stories that I survived through. I was very poor and it was amazing that I didn't wind up dead or in jail. I went through some really wild things. It goes from the day I was born till **GODSMACK** gets a record deal and stops there. I don't want it to be the clichéd rock success storybook. I want this book to be more of an inspiration to show, "Hey, I was just like you". I was not born a rock star. I was the same guy that did drugs and stole cars and if you have some kind of a hope or dream, you can achieve it.

Now my all time favorite band is BLACK SABBATH. I am admittedly obsessed with all things SABBATH related, and the two of you both played with the band at separate times on the Ozzfest. Shannon you played with them first, right? How did that happen?

Shannon Larkin: It all started with Whitfield Crane from UGLY KID JOE. He dragged Robert Trujillo out to see me in a psycho-rockabilly band I was in, and I guess I impressed him. Well since you follow Ozzy's career, you know he always blows his voice out at least once during a tour. So this is on Ozzfest 1997 in Columbus OH and, about an hour before Ozzy comes on, he blows his voice out.

Was that the show where a riot broke out? Didn't some other bands come out on stage to play SABBATH covers to calm the audience down?

Shannon Larkin: Yeah, some of the guys from PANTERA and FEAR FACTORY came out to jam and do some songs for the fans, but it didn't work and people were rioting. So right then and there they announced a make-up day, to just get the people to stop. But they never asked Michael Bordin. He was supposed to start a tour with FAITH NO MORE right after the Ozzfest was over, so he couldn't do it. Robert Trujillo calls me up and asks me if I could play with Ozzy and SABBATH and learn 24 songs in a week. I said yes! So I go and I learn all 24 songs. But they wanted me to come out on the road with them for a few days and sit behind Mike so I would get used to it and not freak out.

Now I'm not that young, but to the guys in SABBATH I guess I was young and this is going back a few years. Tony Iommi looks at me and he's like, "who's this kid? I don't know if he can play with BLACK SABBATH." But I had already secured the Ozzy gig. They talked about flying in Carmine Appice or someone else that was older and more experienced. Robert Trujillo grabs me by the scruff of my neck and pulls me towards Tony Iommi and goes, "tell him." So I go, "Mr. Iommi, I know all the songs. It would be fruitless for you to fly in anybody. I won't let you down." Tony goes, "Let me think about it." Then they have an audition and here's where FEAR FACTORY comes into my life again. The big day of the audition I go down there, and its FEAR FACTORY's drum kit that they want me to play on. They have a gigantic double bass, 100 toms, and cymbals everywhere. And I'm used to playing on a smaller style Bill Ward type kit. So I get out there at noon with Tony Iommi and Geezer Butler, you know Ozzy didn't even show up. We do "War Pigs". After the beginning part with drums, Tony comes in early with the riff because there are no vocals. Geezer and I look at each other and we go to follow him but then it all kind of falls apart. Iommi gets pissed takes his guitar off and says, "That's it, it's over"! I run over to him and say, "What's wrong?" He looks at me and goes, "I can't do it without a vocalist". I look over and Burton C. Bell is over there. I run over to Burt and ask him if he knows the lyrics to "War Pigs". He says of course. So I ask him if he wants to sing it with SABBATH right now and he says "hell yeah!" I run over to Tony to ask if we could do it once more with Burt, so we did and we nailed it. It worked and then we did two more songs. I got the gig.

So what were the other two songs of this one time Iommi/Butler/Larkin/Bell line up?

Shannon Larkin: We did "Black Sabbath" and "Sweet Leaf" next. After that Tony Iommi took his guitar off looked at me and said, "Do you want to go to lunch?" I'm like sure!

And then the actual sets with Ozzy and SABBATH went well?

Shannon Larkin: Yeah that was great.

Sully, you had a similar experience with SABBATH. I heard that you sang "Heaven And Hell" with Tony, Geezer and Bill. How was that and how do I get a copy?

Sully Erna: One of crew guys has it (laughs). After we met the SABBATH guys a few times I would get to talking to Tony Iommi, who's a really cool guy. I would tell him, no offense to Ozzy or whatever, but *Heaven And Hell* is my favorite record, I just love that shit!

I agree.* Heaven And Hell *and* Mob Rules *are classic albums.

Sully Erna: So I would tell Tony that I wish they would play it. He would say, "I know, but Ozzy won't sing it because it's DIO, blah blah." And I was like, "I'll fucking sing it", and I was just kidding around. Then one day I get a knock on my door and it's Tony's assistant going, "Hey, Tony wants you upstairs during sound check and they want you to sing "Heaven And Hell", and I was like, "Get the fuck out of here!" So I remember being up on stage and going, "I can't remember the fucking words." I was panicking! But it was really cool. We got to jam it at sound check a few times. I got to front BLACK SABBATH for one song!

UNIVERSAL

Music Reviews

ARCH ENEMY – *Anthems of Rebellion* – Century Media Records

If *Wages of Sin* was the album that got the world's attention about ARCH ENEMY, then *Anthems of Rebellion* will be the one that kicks the world right in the teeth. It's a superior album in every way, which is saying a lot considering that *Wages of Sin* is a top-notch metal album. Angela Gossow's singing is not only more confident, it's even a tad more decipherable, yet doesn't lose any of her uniquely brutal delivery. The tracks are heavy as hell with some of the crunchiest riffs yet, while the band has achieved an even greater sense of melody on songs like "We Will Rise." The delivery is so tight you could bounce a quarter off of it. Add to that the spectacular guitar soloing of the Amott brothers, some sparing use of clean backing vocals by Christopher Amott, effective keyboard accents, and the first rate production of Andy Sneap. The combination of these ingredients is absolutely lethal and will surely catapult ARCH ENEMY to the top of the metal heap. *Anthems of Rebellion* will crack you upside the head and leave you humming the melodic death metal choruses. Highly recommended. – Scott Alisoglu Century Media Records: 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, CA 90250 USA www.centurymedia.com

CALLENISH CIRCLE – *My Passion Your Pain* – Metal Blade Records

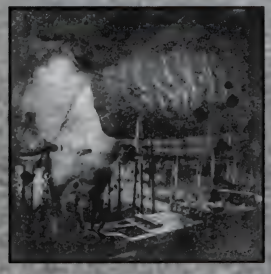
This is an exciting release from 10-year veterans CALLENISH CIRCLE. The band always publishes great records but has not been able to break open the stateside market. This album will hopefully change that. Patrick's vocal delivery is splendidly diverse and holds the listener's ear throughout the album. The guitars display the crunch typical of melodic death but really shine during the clean solo work. CALLENISH has seamlessly incorporated elements of industrial music, a maneuver fans should definitely appreciate. The electronic aspects add to the power of the album, a major plus as this technique typically fails. The album rarely breaks its hell bent pace and when it does, the effect is tremendous. The surprise comes with the long tracks on the album, "What Could Have Been" and "My Hate Unfolds" (my favorite track on the album and a brilliant example of this band at their best). Although both tracks clock in at over seven minutes, the length doesn't negatively affect the ferocious delivery of either song. This is a great addition to the CALLENISH catalogue and heavily recommended for fans of melodic death metal. – Kurt Krueger CALLENISH CIRCLE: www.callenish-circle.com Metal Blade Records: 2828 Cochran St, PMB 302, Simi Valley, CA 93065 USA www.metalblade.com

DEEDS OF FLESH – *Reduced to Ashes* – Unique Leader Records

Fifth album from death metal veterans DEEDS OF FLESH and it illustrates how a great band gets better with age. These guys have been tearing up the scene for years with little recognition for their work. This album and a recent tour with CANNIBAL CORPSE (saw the show in Denver, DEEDS kicked serious ass!) should change that. All of these songs pummel your eardrums with the viciousness of Mike's double bass attack. Erik and Jacoby throw down some of the tightest riffs I have heard in a long time. That all three of these guys can play at blinding speeds and make the songs sound slow, like a corpse being dragged through the mud, is an amazing feat. Great sludge work. Critical addition to the DEEDS catalogue. My favorites include the title track, "Empyrean" and "Banished." "The Endurance" is aptly named and clocks in at over eleven minutes! If you are a fan of death metal, get out and pick this album up. – Kurt Krueger DEEDS OF FLESH: www. deedsofflesh.com Unique Leader Records: PO Box 6544, Los Osos, CA 93412 USA www.uniqueleader.com

GOLDEN DAWN – *Masquerade* – Napalm Records

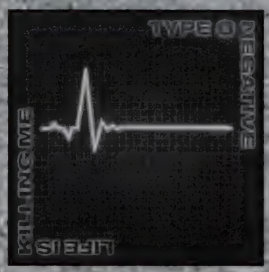
Seven years after GOLDEN DAWN's debut record *The Art of Dreaming* comes *Masquerade*. Just like *The Art of Dreaming*, *Masquerade* is all over the place, flirting with multiple genres yet still retaining the prog-goth/black metal core they're known for. The difference this time around is a larger budget, better material, and an even wider range of cross-pollination. The injection of classical Baroque with STRATOVARIUS-like guitar melodies makes a puzzling concoction. Add in sludgy mosh-riffs, plenty of hooks, diverse arrangements, Austrian folk, clean and distorted vocals, Viking influences, power metal flirtations, black metal wardrums, techno dance samples - this one's all over the place, tailored for none other than the biggest prog metal junkies on the face of the planet. Majestic and brutal, mystic and complex, weird as hell yet oddly satisfying, *Masquerade* finds itself in a realm thus far untouched. Worth checking out if you are extremely open minded to experimentation. – Ryan Bartek Napalm Records: PO Box 1983, Port Townsend, WA 98368 USA www.napalmrecords.com



KULT OF AZAZEL – *Oculus Infernum* – Arctic Music Group

KULT is one of the flagship bands of the American black metal scene and deservingly so. They definitely understand their niche and play it to the fullest extent of darkness. This album is a great addition to the KULT repertoire and it is great to hear true black metal, in the vein of MARDUK, originating in the States. The use of three vocalists adds to the overall effect of the album, infusing diverse personalities to the lyrical presentation. The drums are usually blast beating their way to hell but KULT is able to settle into some really dark grooves. Standout tracks include the title track and "Invoking the Infernal Majesty," the only "slow" paced song on the album. The insert is well designed with gothic style lettering and wicked illustrations. If you are at all interested in Satanic black metal or just really hard ass, evil metal, this is a great buy. I would caution you against this if you attended church last Sunday! – Kurt Krueger KULT OF AZAZEL: www.kultofazazel.com Arctic Music Group: 400 South East 9th St, Ft Lauderdale, FL 33316 USA www.arcticmusicgroup.com

TYPE O NEGATIVE – *Life Is Killing Me* – Roadrunner Records



Their *Least Worst Of* collection may have tided fans over since *World Coming Down*, yet many have eagerly awaited *Life Is Killing Me*. The "Drab Four's" unique bottom heavy guitar and bass sound, accentuated with creepy feedback drenched outlines, is stenciled in meticulously by the reliably robust and crisp Silver/Steele production treatment. Unfortunately, the production is not quite as *crispy* clear as that found on *October Rust*, something that could have enhanced the punkier, new wave influenced songs. Sure, their gothic mask is just one feature of TYPE O NEGATIVE's costume, yet I can't help but wish that they had dug deeper into Bela Lugosi's coffin. It's likely that the "Black No. One" hair dye has been diluted so as to dispel the myth held by many gothic boys and girls that Peter Steele is *Nosferatu* in the flesh. With that said, this magic of this release lies in the fact that it isn't OTT for its own sake. It flows naturally and captures the jam vibe found on *World Coming Down*. This is TYPE O's upbeat album, and it works. It sews together the band's entire back catalogue, and with repeated listens it will grow on you like the cobwebs draping an old cellar. While *Life Is Killing Me* doesn't measure up to TYPE O's monumental and ground-breaking first three releases, it does prove them to be giants amongst dwarves when compared to the uninspired drivel that floods the mainstream heavy metal world. TYPE O NEGATIVE has provided yet another soundtrack to your late night, beer drinking visits to the cemetery. – Jay Gorania Roadrunner Records: 902 Broadway, 8th FL, New York, NY 10010 USA www.roadrun.com

WEHRWOLFE – *Godless We Stand* – Magick Records

War Metal from deep within the Bible belt. North Carolina is not the place you normally expect black metal to creep out of, but WEHRWOLFE finds its way to your CD player via Magick Records with a pretty strong effort. The vocals are slightly different from the typical screeching of black metal, more on the guttural side with some effects thrown in for good measure. The drums basically blast their path from beginning to end. Guitars shred at a mind blowing pace with some interesting clean solo work. WEHRWOLFE have developed a sound somewhat reminiscent of DRAGONLORD and pull it off fairly well. If you are a fan of black and war metal, this is definitely worth looking into. Probably won't replace MARDUK on your player but few bands can topple the mighty. This will give them a good fight. – Kurt Krueger WEHRWOLFE: www.wehrwolfe.com Magick Records: 13428 Maxella Ave #251, Marina Del Rey, CA 90292 USA www.magickrecords.com

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CHARGER

Confessions of a Man (Mad Enough to Live Amongst Beasts) **– Peaceville Rec**

Just beneath international radar lurks a terrifyingly noisy and incredible riff-heavy behemoth called CHARGER. The UK sludge-meets-hardcore-meets-noisecore monsters have been at it for a while and have just now released this impressive first full-length. There is a good dose of the sludge/doom genre on display here, but this is no Southern Lord Records act. Oddly titled tracks like "God Made Us in the Image of his Ass" and "A Ventilation System for Cooling Poultry" feature sludgy guitar tones, shrill noisecore madness, and the unrelenting screeches of lead vocalist Tim Machin. Fittingly enough, Machin works with the mentally ill during the day; no wonder the vitriol flies when he blows out your eardrums on this release. What really separate CHARGER from the sludge and noisecore pack are great riffs on one hand and interesting song structures on the other. This is not a slowly droning sludge album nor is it necessarily noise for the sake of noise. The band knows how to tear flesh with a heavy riff, move full speed ahead when you aren't expecting it, and of course slither along the swampy bottom, always making for an interesting listening experience. The rage is incredibly violent and the madness never ends, sending you spiraling down into a teeth-rattling vortex of sonic mayhem. This is definitely one of the most effective genre blends I've heard in quite a while. – Scott Alisoglu Peaceville Records: PO Box 41084, Philadelphia, PA 19127 USA www.peaceville.com

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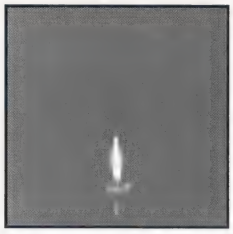


AZRAEL

Into Shadows Act 1: Denial **– Moribund**

Haunting and grim, the way a black metal album should sound. This is an excellent example of the emerging black metal scene here in the States. Moribund is putting together a tremendous roster of American acts and AZRAEL definitely deserves a place among the heavy hitters. From the spellbinding instrumental opening, through the brilliantly executed songs lurking at the heart of the album, to the neck breaking finish, this is a tremendous album. The record is characterized by its often sparse use of instruments, which enhances the pulverizing coldness at the heart of this music. Standout tracks include "Into Shadows" and an interpretation of Nietzche's work entitled "Shroud of Icy Stillness". The band has only been around four years and, despite smaller releases, this is the first full-length release. Looking forward to many more. Crucial purchase for fans of the black metal scene or just really creepy, dark music. – Kurt Krueger Moribund Records: 530-A 19th St, Port Townsend, WA 98368 USA www.moribundcult.com

COMPOS MENTIS

Fragments of a Withered Dream **– Lost Disciple Records**

This is the first I have heard of this band, something I consider a minor tragedy. The album is an excellent example of multi-genre composition and should impress a wide range of fans. COMPOS has found a terrific balance between many styles and transitions between the different paces with ease. The vocals are strong and the guitar work is incredible. The riffs are very tight and the solo work is mind blowing. The keyboards are used sparingly and to great effect. COMPOS sidesteps the pitfall of over-production and serves up an album that will fill a void in my CD player for quite a while. Fans of BORKNAGAR and TRAIL OF TEARS will definitely find this to be a great album, while fans of melodic death and the dreary aspects of European death will also enjoy *Fragments*. Great album and looking forward to the next one! – Kurt Krueger Lost Disciple: PO Box 340, Winthrop, MA 02152 USA www.lostdisciple.com

CRIPPLE BASTARDS

Desperately Insensitive **– Deathvomit Records**

Very fast and very loud. These guys can shred! Unfortunately this is what you would expect from a grind / gore band. There is not much going on here that has not been done before. Although the band itself is able to pull off their songs with technicality and precision, they haven't broken any new ground except for time with 19 tracks in less than 30 minutes. This album is an affirmation that this is how CRIPPLE BASTARDS sound. The insert is great, full of lyrics and other information relevant to the songs. A couple of the songs are sung in their native Italian, which has little effect on the listener's understanding of the near unintelligible lyrics. Several of the songs have a great sense of humor, including one song dedicated to the joys of devouring "Cardboard." This is a good buy if you are looking for a fun grind / gore album, but is not recommended for transient metal fans. – Freddy Rollins Deathvomit Records: PO Box 14815, Fremont, CA 94539 USA www.necropolisrecords.com

CYST

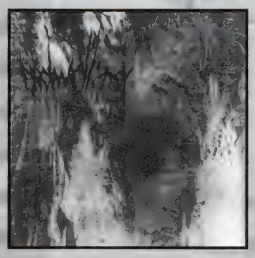
Concussion Symphony **– Hook n Mouth Records**

This is the first full-length release for CYST although they have been together since 1996. Classic thrash metal sound explodes out of the speakers as the first track begins. Listening to this album took me back to the old days of 1980's era SLAYER and early SEPULTURA (remember *Schizophrenia*?!). The twin guitars fly with strong riffs and great distortion. Alex's drumming is solid throughout the album, ranging from blast to fast paced grooves. Dan's vocals are articulate and throat wrenching. Great work all around. Despite being the first album out of the gate for CYST, this is obviously a band with a lot of stage time under their belt and tons of experience. Very tight sound. Stand out tracks include "I'll Break You Back" and "Inhuman." Check out the "Angel of Death" cover at the end. Highly recommended for fans of classic thrash and SLAYER. – Freddy Rollins CYST: www.cystband.com Hook n Mouth Records: PO Box 1050, Boynton Beach, FL 33425 USA www.hooknmouthrecords.com

HOUWITSER

Damage Assessment **– Osmose Productions**

HOUWITSER have a new CD coming out in November called *Damage Assessment*. When I first got a hold of HOUWITSER back in 1999 I was very excited due to the fact that it was members of one of my favorite bands SINISTER. However when there is a side band like that, you should not expect them to sound the same way that the primary band did or does. That was the case with HOUWITSER. *Damage Assessment* is a solid death metal album to the teeth. The drums are gleaming with Aad's sound, the guitar playing is clean and tough, as well as catchy riffs, which always make an album fun to listen to listen to all the way through. *Damage Assessment* always has a strong flavor from the *Cross the Styx* and *Diabolical Summoning* era of SINISTER. Those two albums were definitive when I was getting into death metal. And surely if you're a fan of death metal, you should give HOUWITSER a shot. – Jim Mills Osmose Productions: B.P. 57, 62990 Beaurainville, France www.osmoseproductions.com



INDWELLING

And My Eye Shall Weep **– Facedown Records**

This is a straightforward death metal release along the lines of SUFFOCATION and CANNIBAL CORPSE. INDWELLING has developed an impressive sound, especially for a three-piece unit. The vocals are the typical growling style of death metal. Guitars are used effectively throughout with tight riffing and some interesting solo work. There are two instrumental tracks, not usually my favorites on death metal releases, but INDWELLING pulls them off with brilliance. The pacing of the album is fantastic and the lack of blast beating from the drummer actually enhances the sound of the album. Highly recommended for fans of a progressive death metal sound. – Freddy Rollins INDWELLING: www.indwelling.net Facedown Records: PO Box 477, Sun City, CA 92586 USA www.facedownrecords.com

LEVIATHAN

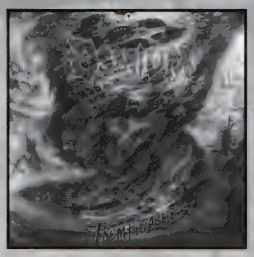
The Tenth Sub Level of Suicide **– Moribund Records**

LEVIATHAN is a one-man black metal project put together by a guy named Wrest. Despite the compositional similarity to BURZUM, the music is definitely moving in a different direction. The pain and despair of Varg's old work is present but this music is aggressive and punishing. The ten tracks take over an hour to unfold with the title track clocking in at a whopping fifteen minutes! Projects of this sort tend to be unfocused but LEVIATHAN is right on target. Around since '98, Wrest has been producing work constantly, and it shows in the strengths of the album. Obviously, the guitar work is mostly done at breakneck speeds, drums are primarily blasting, and the vocals are usually at a high-pitched screech but Wrest knows how to balance the speed with the absolute lack of speed. The pacing of the album is really the major accomplishment. This is a well-executed piece of death infused grimness. If you are a fan of BURZUM or JUDAS ISCARIOT, I highly recommend picking this up. – Kurt Krueger Moribund Records: 530-A 19th Street, Port Townsend, WA 98368 USA www.moribundcult.com

MALIGNANCY

Cross Species Transmutation **– United Guttural Records**

This is by far the best MALIGNANCY effort to date. Although short, seven tracks in little over sixteen minutes, this is an excellent example of gore metal done properly. Danny's vocals grow more repulsive with each recording and the lyrics are actually growing in substance. Unusual comment due to the crippling intellectual nature of this genre, but MALIGNANCY doesn't seem confined by those limitations. Roger's drums get better every year and he will definitely continue to improve as he plays more and more projects. The guitars are terrific, churning with the frenetic impulse of a meat grinder. Major credit to the band on putting together one of the most intense and well illustrated inserts ever. Overall, this is a fine example of what gore metal should sound like. Definitely recommended for fans of all death metal. – Kurt Krueger MALIGNANCY: www.malignancy.com United Guttural Records: PO Box 752, Greyslake, IL 60030 USA www.unitedguttural.com



OSMIUM

From the Ashes **– Dirthead Records**

OSMIUM hails from San Jose, CA, home of noteworthy underground bands like SEVERED SAVIOUR, SAN RESINA and RAGWEED. If you know anything about OSMIUM, you know that the late, beloved Rob Lumbre played bass for them, and is given credit on this CD. *From the Ashes* is superbly produced and should push OSMIUM up from the local "powerslave.com" scene and into a larger spotlight. From the beginning of the first song "Drifting Away," to the glorious five minute closer "The Consecration," the band grabs and holds your attention with 11 tracks of jamming metal music. There are thrash and progressive influences here and there, but the guitars (and there are some great solos) and vocalist Pete Pellizzari definitely lean towards death metal. One thing is for sure *From the Ashes* demonstrates that OSMIUM is an accomplished band with tons of potential. – Jon "K" Konjoyan OSMIUM: 848 Russell Ln, Milpitas, CA 95035 USA www.osmium.net

PUNISHMENT

Broken But Not Deadv **– Thorp Records**

Five hardcore guys from Philly sure know how to make some noise! While hailed largely as a live band, their second full-length album, *Broken But Not Dead*, isn't some crappy home-recording to be sure! It gives you a good idea of the energy that the band would exude in a live show. Staying true to their D.I.Y roots and ethics, PUNISHMENT is growing as a band, musically—offering hardcore, with distinct metal overtones—having something to offer the metal fans, too. It's been a tough road to get here (line-up changes, a record deal gone bad), but this album was worth the pain, I think. It's a good tribute to old-school hardcore, but it's decidedly modern in many ways—again, blending more melodic metal guitars with the "punishing" vocals. Give it a listen, and if they're at a venue near you, go check them out. – Errin Klein PUNISHMENT: www.punishmenthxc.com Thorp Records: PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612 USA www.thorprecords.com

SARGEIST

Satanic Black Devotion **– Moribund Records**

This one's got my vote for the raw black metal album of the year. Just like the moniker of their infamous label, SARGEIST is cold, grim and evil. Much as in the early BURZUM recordings (Varg is obviously a giant influence here) the material is focused around an epic, trance-inducing guitar line, with pummeling war drums guiding the sound into dismal descent. The dirty "basement demo" sound fits the music perfectly, as tortured vocals let loose unspeakable agony that can only compare to It's work in ABRUPTUM. If you are akin to the abyssmic musicianship of DARKTHRONE's *Transylvanian Hunger* and are searching for further mayhem in the same vein, look no further. Is *Satanic Black Devotion* innovative? Far from it but it does present the blackened roots that this entire genre was built upon with SARGEIST doing it better than nearly 75% of the acts putting out records today. – Ryan Bartek Moribund Records: 530-A 19th Street, Port Townsend, WA 98368 USA www.moribundcult.com

SPLYT

Disturbance of Affect **– Independent Release**

SPLYT is another excellent heavy/melodic rock/metal band coming out of the Northern California scene. What sets them apart, according to the local powerslave.com website, is "the type of sound they use, and the precise method with which they execute." I agree. Their tunes are heavy, but they manage to combine the heaviness with melody to produce a slightly unique variation on a very tried and true formula. The playing is impeccable, with drummer Seabrien Arata, in particular, a standout. Eric Henderson is a convincingly energetic vocalist, and overall, not a weak link here. The sound quality is equally first rate. Sylvia Massey Shivy (TOOL, SYSTEM OF A DOWN, RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS) oversaw the recording of this disc. – Jon "K" Konjoyan SPLYT: 360 Fairway Dr, Pacifica, CA 94044 USA www.splyt.com

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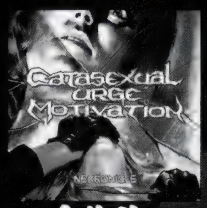
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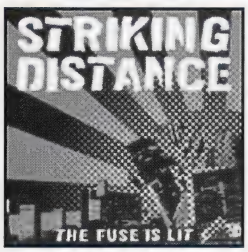


STRIKING DISTANCE

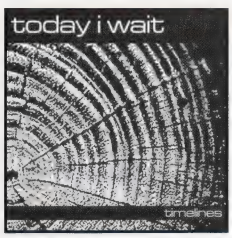
The Fuse is Lit – Bridge Nine Records

STRIKING DISTANCE (Aaron Barth – Bass; Dave Byrd – Vocals; Eddie Diaz – Drums; Mike Stankovich – Guitar) is an unyielding, good ol' hardcore band from Washington, D.C. *The Fuse is Lit* contains six songs that were recorded live at none other than CBGB's. It's a good sound, full of aggression and societal condemnation. It's very energetic, and I can just imagine the throngs of punks moshing madly as the band played. The recording itself is surprisingly clean, especially for being recorded live. The CD's 13 songs take only about 20 minutes, making any self-respecting hardcore lover proud. It comes quick and fast and it's in your face, making you feel like you've just been thrown to the ground and stomped on. Which, of course, is what you want! – Errin Klein STRIKING DISTANCE: www.strikingdistance.net Bridge Nine Records: PO Box 990052, Boston, MA 02199-0052 USA www.bridge9.com

THROCULT

Soldiers of a Blackened War – Crash Music

FORMED in 1997 as THROAT CULTURE, the six members of THROCULT have inked a deal with Crash Music and hit their stride with this mini-album. *Soldiers of a Blackened War* is a tight mix of black metal ferocity and death metal groove. The keyboards add just the right amount of atmosphere, yet in no way overwhelm. Tracks like "Hunted" stand out because of the band's ability to break bone and tear flesh in wicked black metal form, while a driving rhythm section powered by Jeremy Portz's strong drumming keeps necks snapping. To top it all off, THROCULT understands how to incorporate enough melody and harmonies to make the tunes stick in your brain. Songs like "Kill or be Killed" and "Eclipse of the Blood Moon" had me screaming along with singer Chris Vigil (under my breath anyway). Vigil's vocal shrieks are even fairly decipherable. The CD also comes with a multimedia section featuring three live videos, biography, band member information, photos, and reviews. THROCULT has found a place that straddles the black and death metal genres that will appeal to fans of both styles, holding the whole thing together with strong songwriting and a brutal attack. That's tough to beat. – Scott Alisoglu Crash Music: 4025 E. Chandler, #70B-3, Phoenix, AZ 85048 USA www.crashmusicinc.com



TODAY I WAIT

Timelines – Friction Records

WHEN TODAY I WAIT released their self-titled debut over a year ago, a huge buzz grew across the internet in anticipation of what this metalcore outfit would come up with next. *Timelines* is the result of all the blood, sweat and tears that followed and I am pleased to say it is a scorching follow up that completely blows their first disc out of the water. The diversity in their arrangements have exploded to new heights, mixing death/thrash/hardcore/emo/dissonance/jazz and a slight hint of black to establish a molotov cocktail of whirlwind sound that bleeds with passion and crushes all opposition. Rarely is there a certifiably weak moment on this disc, as the band flows seamlessly into uncharted territory. *Timelines* is chock-full of memorable guitar riffs, primal screaming, nightmarish breakdowns and untoppable energy. Add in an oddly placed cover of THE MISFITS classic "Bullet" and you've got one damn fine release on your hands. – Ryan Bartek TODAY I WAIT: www.todayiwait.com

TWICE

Some Things Can't Be Taken Back – RHC Records

TWICE makes hardcore music that any metalhead can love. Influences like TESTAMENT and ANTHRAX are evident in the tracks on this NV-based band's new CD. How good is TWICE? Good enough to have actually opened up for both TESTAMENT and ANTHRAX, along with CONVERGE, DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN and DANZIG and good enough to call SKINLAB their friends. Jim Williams' emotionally charged vocals are the centerpiece here, but the band keeps him on his toes with complex time changes and powerful grooves. I haven't seen them play, but I understand that their live show is something to behold. – Jon "K" Konjoyan TWICE: 7440 W 4th St #27, Reno, NV 89523 USA www.twicemusic.com

ULTIMATE REVENGE DVD

Metal Mind Productions

ULTIMATE REVENGE is a DVD put out by Poland's Metal Mind. It showcases some great Polish talent like YATTERING, CHRIST AGONY, DECAPITATED, BEHEMOTH and the kings of Polish death metal, VADER. There are live footage clips taken from bands playing in Poland but you also get some great DVD extras. You even get a complete discography and bio of each band featured on the DVD so you can check out every band name right there at home in your underwear. There is also a second audio disc, bringing more madness to your home. In case you have been slipping on your underground stuff you can catch up real quick and get cozy with ANAL STENCH, DEVILYN, ENTER CHAOS, and HATE. ULTIMATE REVENGE is one of the better DVD's in the metal world at the moment. You should drop your loot on this if you get a chance to. You'll be a happy metal head. – Jim Mills Metal Mind Productions: www.metalmind.com Music Video Distr: www.musicvideodistributors.com

WOLFEN SOCIETY

Conquer Divine – House of Death Records

WOLFEN SOCIETY combines the forces of DARK FUNERAL, ELECTRIC HELLFIRE CLUB, INCANTATION and ACHERON. All four bands bring a different vibe and sound to the table. The most noticeable is ACHERON and ELECTRIC HELLFIRE CLUB, as Lord Ahriman and Kyle sort of take the back seat. No overbearing DARK FUNERAL or INCANTATION going on here. *Conquer Divine* sheds some light for the extreme music world by allowing mid-tempo metal to be sprinkled with keyboards and run rampant throughout the entire CD. Of course all of the members are big supporters of the Devil, so all the lyrics deal with Satanism, but with less goat-fucking than normal, so that's a plus. The extreme music world needs some variation in it, new ideas and sounds. WOLFEN SOCIETY is on to something here, and hopefully they will pursue more in the future. *Conquer Divine* should be in your CD player by the next issue of Pit and if it's not, you certainly don't want to make any of these guys mad! – Jim Mills House Of Death Records: PO Box 2892, Joliet, IL 60434-2892 USA www.houseofdeathrecords.com

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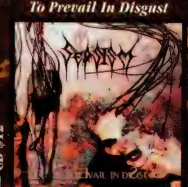

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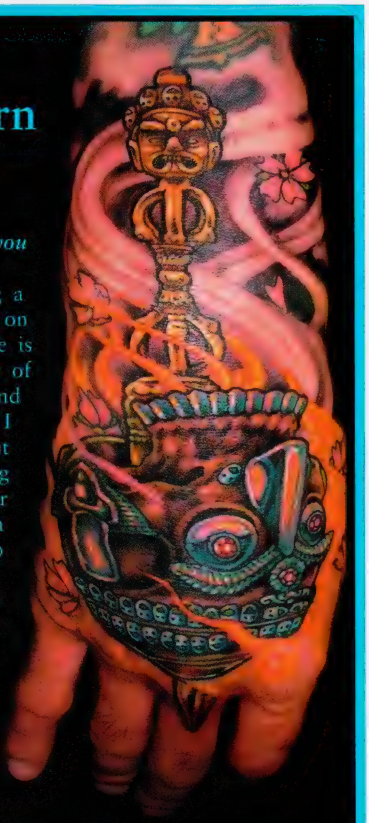
By Kelli Malella



Still learning the tools of the trade and finds inspiration from fellow artists. He originally looked up to artists like Guy Aitchison, Paul Booth, and Marcus Pacheco who were all doing amazing things. He now expands the list to include Horiyoshi III, Robert Hernandez, Bob Tyrrell, Filip Leu. In looking through his work on the website, I noticed the variety of color tattoos he has worked on. Normally I am not a big fan of color work because the majority of color tattoos I have seen weren't that interesting. It takes a high level of talent to make a color piece impressive and Tim Kern of Last Rites Tattoo has got it down!

Pit: How long have you been working with Paul Booth and what has the experience been like?

Tim Kern: I have been at Last Rites for about a year, and it's Hell...but we like it that way. It is always interesting working at our shop. New horrors around every corner.

Do you ever feel pressure working for someone like Paul Booth who is known to be one of the best tattoo artists of our time? Or do you look at it like an amazing opportunity to expand your own knowledge and skill?

I put more pressure on myself than anyone else does. The shop has an international reputation for evil, so we try to keep our standards high. It's an incredible opportunity to work with Paul, but we are all individuals in this cult. We each have our own styles, and there isn't any pressure to work any one way. All of the artists in our shop are great; we feed off of each other (sometimes literally).

Would you say you have found your own style or are you still working on it?

I definitely have a way I like to draw things, but hopefully that will continue to evolve. If you don't seek to improve your work, then you are lazy or just don't care. I am lazy, but I usually care so I always try to make each tattoo the best I'm able to do.

When I was looking at your portfolio on the site I noticed you have a lot of really good color tattoos. Do you like to work more with color? Was learning how to do color tattoos more difficult than black & white?

I get asked for color work more, but I like doing black and gray also. There are different challenges with color than black and gray work, and it can be difficult coming up with colors that work well together and in the context of the tattoo. It took me a few years to feel comfortable in my approach to my work. Now, I am more able to experiment and take risks.

Where do you get the inspiration for your art?

I really like things that look sweet and innocent on the surface, but are really twisted and perverse on closer examination. Trevor Brown is a big influence, and so is Mark Ryden. Medical imagery and dolls are fun. Serial Killers. Horror movies. Anything deviant and Japanese I like.

How did you get to where you are today in the sense of creativity, design, and workmanship?

I had to make a blood pact with Satan.

What do you feel people should know when it comes to getting a new tattoo? Will you tell someone if you think the piece they want to get is not such a good idea? Or is it more if they want it they can have it?

I will always tell someone if I think his or her idea won't make a good tattoo. We try to steer people toward a design that will flow well with their body, isn't too small, and is unique to him/her. It is also good to make sure that you are being tattooed in a sterile environment, by someone whose work you have seen and trust.

When people come in do they give you the actual art that they want and say "don't change it" or "make this better" or do they just tell you to go to town?

It varies. Usually, I like for the client to have an idea of what they want, but want me to draw it for them. If someone says, "do whatever you want", they may get something I really like, but isn't their style at all. A little guidance is good. I can't always just listen to the voices in my head...

How much time do you need when you work on someone from start to finish? Like when they decide what they want, do you tell them to wait a few weeks while you work on it or do you start immediately?

Clients will usually end up waiting a few days to a few months, depending on what they want and what my schedule is like. Bigger projects that involve a lot of drawing tend to take longer to start, and some subjects are easier for me to draw. I try to start projects as soon as I can, but I'm not going to rush through a drawing just to get started sooner. I would rather it take a little longer, because it will be a better tattoo if have the time to develop it properly.

Do you feel like the tattoo industry is changing for the better or the worse...or not at all?

The level of artistry in tattooing is higher than it has ever been. Everywhere you go there is someone you've never heard of that is doing killer work. Unfortunately, there is also twenty times that who are ruining people with abominable shit done in their basement, or trailer or wherever, with no sterility or anything. The art form has come a long, long way, but there are always some idiots to give the industry a bad name.

What are your plans as far as work goes? Do you want to open your own shop at one point, travel around the world, or get into other avenues of art?

Right now, I am content to work for someone else. I had my own shop before (with my brother, James), and it is nice to not have to deal with paying the bills and ordering supplies or whatever. I travel quite a bit to conventions in the USA, but I do want to see the rest of the world. Next year, I will probably start to do some European shows with Paul, and I want to go to Japan.

What are some of your other hobbies outside of tattoos? Do you have a life outside of the shop?

No, I don't have a life outside my work. Maybe someday, that will change. I do watch a lot of Japanese horror DVD's. I try to do personal artwork (not for tattoos), when I can.

So...are you a metal head??

I listen to a lot of different stuff, but I am a metal head. I love pre-black album METALLICA, RIGOR MORTIS, MOTORHEAD, IRON MAIDEN, and ZENI GEVA (Japanese death metal band). Recently, (since joining Last Rites) I've been listening to a lot of BURZUM, THORNS (not that Matthew Sweet crap), MY DYING BRIDE and SUPERJOINT RITUAL.

Have you done work on any bands yet and who?

The only metal guy I've tattooed is Joey Zampella from LIFE OF AGONY, about five or six years ago (they were on tour with MEGADETH). He was a really cool guy. We started right after he was finished playing, and worked until about 8:00 in the morning.

If you could tattoo anyone in the world, who would it be (living or dead)?

Christina Ricci, and I prefer she still be alive when I do it. Digging up her corpse would be too much work.

What do you suggest for aspiring tattoo artists? How should they get started and whom should they look to for help?

I think the best way is to get your drawing skills up, and then approach an artist who you like and see if they are willing to take on an apprentice. An apprenticeship will help you avoid a lot of the mistakes you will make if you try to teach yourself. And ask a lot of questions.

Okay that's it... any last words?

They made me do it.

END

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ARTISTS OF THE MACABRE

By Kelli Malella

For this issue's Artists of the Macabre I had the chance to speak to Travis Smith. He has worked on album covers for bands like KATATONIA, OPETH, and ANATHEMA. Travis has always "tinkered" with art for various purposes but had no formal education in the area and learned his craft mostly from hands-on work, experimentation, and practice. He began to take things a bit more seriously when PSYCHOTIC WALTZ asked him to design the cover for their *Bleeding* album. Although he was still new to the digital medium, the way most covers are seem to be done lately, that project opened the door for him to work with other acts like SKINLAB and SADUS. Travis realized that this was something he would like to pursue.

Pit: Why did you begin working with heavy metal bands? What interests you about this particular field?

Travis Smith: I have always been into metal of all forms and the imagery and atmosphere that went with it, especially during that time when I was discovering a lot of new bands and styles. It is a great creative outlet and a way to be involved with something I am passionate about.

Name some of the bands that you have designed covers for and some that you would like to work for.

To date, I have created images for such bands as KATATONIA, OPETH, ANATHEMA, DEVIN TOWNSEND, KING DIAMOND, NEVERMORE, DEATH, SOILWORK, SOCIETY 1, and ICED EARTH, as well as many others. Off the top of my head I'd love to do something with PORCUPINE TREE, Tori Amos, or Dax Riggs (ACID BATH). If I sat down and thought about it, there would be a lot of bands I'd like to work with. I have been lucky enough to work with all the bands I'd like to most and hope to continue working with them.

What style would you say you have when it comes to your art?

Someone else might have a better answer because I am not sure what I would call it or exactly into what category it would fit. I like to vary it so one cover won't look too much like another I have done.

I see that you use real pictures and add art on top of it. Is this what you do for the majority of your art or do you like to try different mediums? How do you get your images to appear the way they do?

After I have a general concept nailed down, I try to see in my head the best way to bring it to life. Then I acquire or create the elements I need and just throw them together. I will experiment with and refine them, try different colorings, et cetera, until it begins to take shape. I have a general idea of what I want when I start, but I basically make it up as I go. When there is nowhere else I can think of to go with a given concept, I call it done. I have different process for each project and I go with the medium that is best for each one in the way I see it. For example, The KATATONIA *Last Fair Deal* CD was straight photography. They wanted imagery that you could go out and see on any given day. For OPETH's *Blackwater Park* CD, I combined pencil, watercolor, and photography because that was the only way I could make happen what I was seeing in my head.

What is your main objective when creating a piece of work for a band?

Simply to realize the band's vision in a way we are both proud of in the end. More personally, when it's done I want to be able to look at it and feel I have progressed and improved in technique or thought process since the last project I have done. They are my ideas and what I feel, or my ideas combined with the band's ideas, which I feel very strongly about. I try to say what the band is saying in a way that will make someone see what we feel or give them a simple story that they can interpret for themselves.

What kinds of issues are discussed when a band or label asks you to create cover art for them? Tell me about the process.

The main factors for me when I am asked to do a project are the concept or general themes, the amount of art desired, and the deadline. If I feel I can do what the band wants, with a quality end result in the given timeframe, I will take the job. Then it's a matter of photographing or creating the textures, elements, and images. I then modify, manipulate, and composite these into a final piece. I have a general goal I want to achieve for each piece but I usually go with what I feel moment to moment and don't spend too much time planning it out at the start. I usually see how it's developing and then work around that. If I am doing a layout as well, I get the materials from the band and put it together after the art has been finalized. I usually email samples to the band along the way so they can give input on the progress. When it's complete I send it to them on a CD.

Where do the ideas typically come from?

No easy answer to that as they can come from anywhere. When they come I am not sure from where. Sometimes the idea is already there in some way just waiting for the proper outlet. Sometimes the idea will appear quickly, telling me what needs to be done, and flow easily throughout the process. More often the idea will not immediately be there and there is a process of weeding out many bad or unsuccessful ideas before a good one presents itself. A few times an idea will be directly triggered by something the band says that I can relate to something I've seen, something I've felt, or somewhere I've been.

Do you have to listen to a band's music first to get an idea of what you would like to do or is it more general? Do you show them a portfolio that they can pick art from?

The covers I do for bands are mostly custom, whether it comes from my ideas or theirs, or a combination of both. Often I start a cover from scratch. Other times I might cannibalize my own past, unused ideas if it can be worked into something that is a good fit. More often than not I am already a fan of the band or at least familiar with their past work. Having that familiarity is a good foundation to build on when taking the first few steps. If no new music is available, we will discuss the theme, concepts or just what they are trying to say. In any case I need to know the style of the band and like to know the general story they are trying to tell. If I have the proper information that way, having the music is not totally necessary but it definitely helps with setting the mood. If I need the right mood and the band's music is unavailable, I will throw on a CD by a similar band if possible. There are covers I have done where I have still not heard the CD's they were for.

Do you find that your inspiration comes from music? If it not, where does it come from?

I find music to be very inspiring sometimes but it is not always the source for it. Sometimes I can find it in everything. Other times I can't find it at all. Unexpected things inspire me at different times. I might leave the house on a normal day, go to the grocery store, and see something unexpected that will give me an idea for a piece. I might be any place and trying to find a way to use everything I see in a work, or as an element, instead of being able to look and see it for what it is. I think it depends on my mood at the time. I might get thoughts from many things in all directions but only a few of them might translate into an image at the time.

Do you let the band have a say in what you create or do you just say,

"Here is what I came up with, like it or leave it"?
The band always has a say because it's ultimately for them. Whether the band comes to me with an idea or the idea is up to me, if what I have put down isn't totally correct, I like to have their input on what could be better. The only time I say "Take it or leave it" is when someone comes to me out of the blue and needs something tomorrow and I cannot create something new for them. If they are asking about any pieces I might already have done, I show them and tell them what I have...but otherwise I never treat it that way. I like a few different "eyes" along the way as it usually helps make for a better result in the end. All the covers that I have done, and are most proud of, were created with input from the client along the way. They usually made me see something I didn't initially think of.

What have been some of your favorite or most memorable covers that you have had the chance to work on and why?
There are quite a few on that list as well and I might come off as a bit of a fan boy here. To pick a few specifics I would say SADUS because it was the first time I worked with someone of whom I was a longtime fan. Chuck and DEATH for the same reasons. Working with Steve and Chuck for the first time was a great experience and I made a few new friends in the process. Then there's KATATONIA, *Tonight's Decision*. KATATONIA has always been one of my favorite bands and I think some of my best ideas ever came out for that CD. I was actually contacted by Anders as I was listening to *Discouraged Ones*. It was my favorite album at that time and I was thinking about how great it might be to work with a band like that. Working with those guys and their music has been some of my best and most inspiring working experiences. Another is *Blackwater Park* by OPETH...another of my favorite bands. I got the lyrics and tried many ideas unsuccessfully. I found the lyrics inspiring but couldn't nail it down. The piece that became the cover basically did itself one night as I was watching TV. It became one of my favorites. KING DIAMOND's *Abigail II* was very memorable because, well, it's the King. Not to mention it was the follow up to one of my favorite albums of all time so the task was very daunting at the beginning. He is a great guy and made me feel very comfortable in the process and I am very happy with the result. NEVERMORE's *Dreaming Neon Black* was another because I seemed to do all of Warrel's exact thoughts before ever talking to him. It was a series I was toying with for a while and was basically the story as Warrel saw it. SOILWORK's *Figure Number Five* was another because I dropped the ball and lost the gig. I still think my magnum opus to this point is DEVIN TOWNSEND's *Terria*. There was something about how easily and frequently the ideas flowed, the way they all fell into place. The whole process of working with Dev made that one of my best working experiences and end results.

Any new covers in the making that you can tell me about?
I have a few things on my plate that I'm still feeling out to see where they are going. At the moment I am working on the WATCH THEM DIE album and a piece for a local band called MURDER MY LOVE.

Despite not attending school for your trade, what would you recommend for people interested in the field of graphic arts?
To be honest I don't feel justified in giving any kind of advice to anyone. Since I started this, I basically have been waking up, making up each day as I go along, and just working to overcome each new obstacle as it presents itself. In a lot of ways I still don't know what I'm doing or how to get back to this point if I had to do it again.

Is this your dream job or do you plan on working in a different medium?
As far as freelance illustration, it is for the most part. The only downside is some months where you wonder if the bills will be paid on time. I would like someday to complement my cover work with other avenues, such as movie or video game box art. But I can think of nothing I'd rather do professionally. I hope to be doing this for a while.

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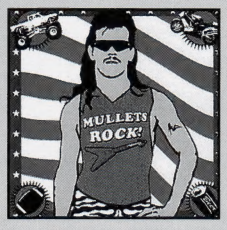
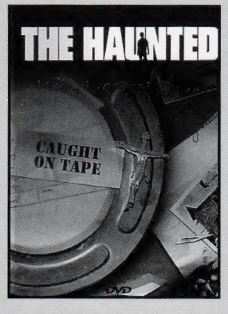


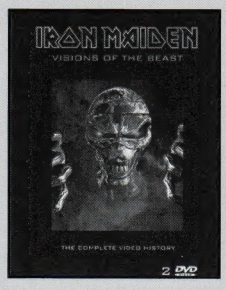
Mullets Rock! is a double disc set celebrating the most popular hair craze in America. The hair-style that ruled (and in some places still rules) America. On this set you can find your favorites from MOUNTAIN, DEEP PURPLE, FOGHAT, FOREIGNER, CHEAP TRICK, LYNYRD SKYNYRD, KANSAS, BOC, and countless others. All of these songs are big FM radio staples, and I'll bet you can associate a song title to each name listed above. It's a great compilation, but what's even greater is the packaging. You get some choice mullets drawings that will bring many memories from the past (if you're old enough to remember). This is a very funny and attractive package. Viva Mullets!!
Contact: www.legacyrecordings.com/mulletsrock



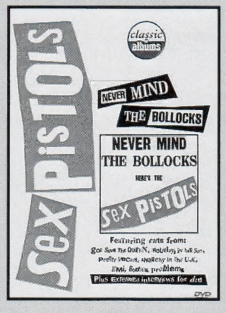
This is perhaps the most brutal DVD of the whole batch. The band is of course THE HAUNTED, and the disc is titled *Caught On Tape*. This DVD contains of two live shows. There is a show from Japan, 2000, and a show from Sweden, 2001. Both shows are very intense; if you have ever seen this band live, you'll know exactly what I'm talking about. THE HAUNTED takes no prisoners on stage, and these two shows are no exception. In addition, there is a documentary of making the latest album *One Kill Wonder*. This is really great because it shows the band at work in the studio, and it offers an insight into how they do it.
Contact: www.earache.com

Staying with the NWOBHM mood. We have one more DVD release from another English legend. This time it's SAXON, and the set is titled *The Saxon Chronicles*. It's a double DVD set, and it features SAXON's performance at Wacken festival. This is a really great concert. Not only is the set list simply phenomenal, but we have a full SAXON production with the eagle and all. That's something the band was never able to pull in the United States due to costs. So, this is as good as it ever gonna get. The second disc includes plenty of video clips the band shot over the years, plenty behind the scenes footage, interviews, history, and discography information. This is the ultimate SAXON DVD.
Contact: www.spvusa.com

ARMORED SAINT's final opus (before the reformation) *Symbol Of Salvation* is back in a very revived form. This very overlooked classic from 1991 received an upgrade by a very high definition. It's not a three CD set. The first disc includes the original album with two bonus videos. The second disc has demos that the band recorded for the album. These demos were pretty hot for a long time on a trading circuit. Now it's all here in one package. The second part of disc two and entire disc three consists of a very inside and informative interview with ARMORED SAINT. Listening to this can be compared to an audio version of the Classic Albums show on VH-1. Brian Slagel, head of Metal Blade Records and a die- hard SAINT fan, conducted the interview. Great job here with this timeless release.
Contact: www.metalblade.com



*IRON MAIDEN's *Visions Of The Beast* is a complete video history. This double DVD set covers every single video clip ever filmed by IRON MAIDEN up until now. With 180 minutes of footage one can't go wrong. This set is very well made, everything looks sharp, once again a must. As with any MAIDEN packaging of late there are plenty of extra features throughout the DVD. I'm very impressed with the whole set. MAIDEN fans must be overjoyed, first the *Rock In Rio*, then *Eddie Archives*, and *The Visions Of The Beast*. Outstanding job here!!!!!
Contact: www.ironmaiden.com



SEX PISTOLS is another band whose *Never Mind The Bollocks* gets the Classic Album treatment. It's another great feature showing a history behind the album that truly shook the music industry in the 70's. And the music the band played back then is as vital today as it was when first conceived. There's plenty of great interviews, some very funny, but above all this a great historic document. If they ever had a History Channel for music this would be the stuff shown. And who knows? Maybe down the line they will have one. Great release.
Contact: www.eaglevisionusa.com

KREATOR finally has a DVD out. This is very nicely packaged and put together DVD. It has the band performing the show, which is very well filmed and mixed. In addition, there are plenty of extras. Clips, interviews, and fan features make up the rest. As Mille said, the DVD is a tribute to the fans. It's a great collection assembled together with a lot of care. Obviously, a must for any KREATOR fan, and a worthwhile addition to any metal DVD collection.
Contact: www.spvusa.com

*On the more lighter and progressive note, FATES WARNING released a new DVD entitled *The View From Here*. This is a very retrospective feature showing the visual history of the band from 1988 onward. In many ways one would wish for some footage from the early days. This is still great because it shows the time where FATES WARNING made the most musical progress. There are many old videos clips and live clips included here, as well as some special documentaries when certain albums were made. Overall, this is a great document that should supplement every FATES WARNING collection.
Contact: www.metalblade.com

Speaking of Classic Albums series, we have another DVD highlighting DEEP PURPLE's *Machine Head*. When it comes to hard rock, it doesn't get more classic than *Machine Head*. This is the album that spawned "Highway Star", "Smoke On The Water", "Lazy", "Space Truckin'", "Pictures Of Home". In fact every song on the album is a classic regardless of its popularity status. This DVD goes behind the scenes of making this great album. There are plenty of interviews with all band members. Many new trivia details can be learned from watching this. DEEP PURPLE, being a favorite band of this writer, makes this release extra special. In many ways you wish that every DEEP PURPLE album received the same treatment. This series is a great idea, and it's very enjoyable.
Contact: www.eaglevisionusa.com

If you are a label re-issuing any old albums or releasing DVDs, e-mail Mark Kadzielawa: thornadoad@yahoo.com

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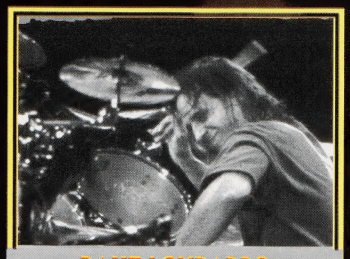

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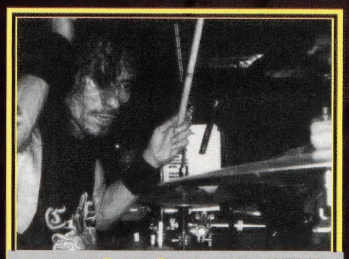

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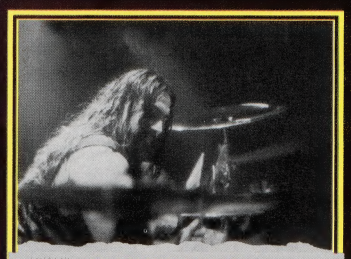

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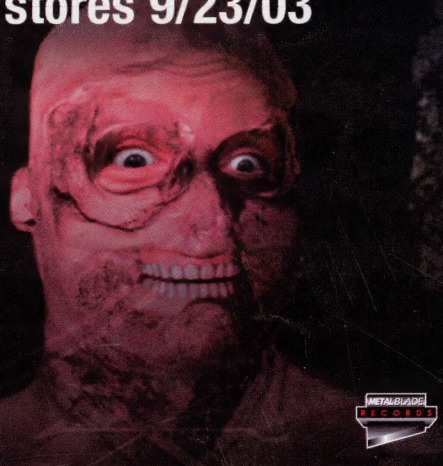

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